

A "SIGNAL" OF REVOLUTION IN THE DIET WORLD: THE GIFT DIET



GIFT Diet - Graduality Individuality Flexibility Tone

When you hear about a new diet, it is essential, in our view, to try to understand clearly what it is all about; for the first time the GIFT DIET targets the signals, positive and negative, that the body receives from the environment and from food and which result in our metabolism responses. We will be building, during these lessons, the whole picture representing the GIFT DIET, with the challenging goal to convince you that our motivations are reasonable. Beginning with the fundamentals, we will face step by step all the issues at hand, starting from how we are made, a man-machine system, with our mechanisms of action and reaction and the legacy that we carry with us since our development and our first steps on this planet. We'll find out, sometimes surprisingly, maybe sometimes with a mild shock, that for most of the physical and physiological aspects, we are not at all different from our leather dressed ancestors. We exhibit the same depletion mechanisms, the same dynamics for provisioning of "reserves", the same hormonal cycles or preservation instincts. But what makes the real difference are other very important aspects: the great availability of food (at least in our part of the industrialized world), its various quality, the average life expectancy, etc. Among differences and similarities we can find today the roots of what has become an extremely

difficult relationship with food, emphasized by the new plague of modern time: obesity (and being overweight in a broader sense). But in these very differences and similarities we can also rediscover our real dietary and psychological needs. This will be the first step to go further, to identify and build together a way that will allow us to finally regain back a friendship with food, after decades of diets linked to pain and sacrifice.

It's important to start with this soon, as a standing point on which to build everything else: GIFT diet stands, in the various and composite landscape of a thousand diets now in the market, with assumptions and bases in a sharp countertrend. It will be our great care and pride to introduce you in these lessons the pillars of a new way of eating, starting from the keystones and the rules that put them in place. We'll treat all the basic aspects of GIFT one by one, with examples, questions and foods for thought.

LESSON DIAGRAM

In each lesson you'll find the explanation of the whys, given that a conscious subscription is worth a thousand times more than the passive acceptance as, from our point of view, comprehension is indeed true sharing. We will show then each rule application method, so that they won't just constitute an obscure theory disconnected from the real world made of grocery shopping, meal organization, concepts that need sometimes to be clarified. Causes for reflection and in-depth analysis will be presented. In each lesson a summary and demo tables and a small assessment test are included, to verify the level of topic knowledge. The ending part of each lesson (with the exception of this very first one which is a complete presentation of all the basic concepts) is enriched with recipes and specific examples of the related section plus a suggestion for personal study and investigation (if desired).

SYMBOL LEGEND

Each lesson consists of an explanation text that can be interspersed with:

- 1) Key discussion theme
- 2) Questions on the subject with prompts to personal answers
- 3) Searching for the "why" in terms of human historical evolution
- 4) Reflection on personal condition
- 5) Evidence of clinical condition risks
- 6) Frequent questions and answers

7) The scientific foundations will always be fully clarified

We recommend to not eat quickly: slowly chewing food and everything we'll say, will result in a good digestion.

THE FULL MEANING OF AN ACRONYM

Needless to remind, the word "gift" in English means "present." The balance between our body and our mind gives us health and wellness. Health, well-being and enjoyment of life are precious gifts, to preserve and to spend every day with intensity and awareness.

Each letter of the word GIFT has a meaning.

G = Graduality

I = Individuality

F = Flexibility

T = Tone

G = Graduality

A gradual approach is essential to meet the desired goals. No diet can make you lose too much weight in a short time without damaging health. The acquisition of a new food consciousness must be absorbed step by step, and stably inserted into everyday life. GIFT diet involves the application of ten important rules, related to many different habits: physical, mental, metabolic. It's not always possible to put them all together in one's lifestyle. Gradual is the way to approach GIFT diet, and the only one that gets you to obtain steady and lasting results. A new "rule" can in fact be completely learned only when it has become part of both our habits and our cultural heritage.

I = Individuality

Every individual has his own peculiarities and talents. No diet should ignore them. We are mathematical relationships between weight, height and body fat. Only a diet that enables us to express freely our own individuality could become a permanent part of our healthy habits. Those who love chocolate and hate soup will have to find an individual path toward health and well-being, that does not mean forgetting themselves (and chocolate). Our genetic, cultural, psychological heritage, needs a diverse approach to get to tangible results.

F = Flexibility

In any diet flexibility is essential. If you can just pick two meals out of a hundred at the restaurant you won't stand for long a new diet. On the other hand we need to understand why it's important not to swallow anything that is laid in front of us. You'll be able to follow our suggestions whenever possible. For the rest, we need to live with a smile. GIFT diet avoids any calorie calculation that requires the use of a scale: the recommended quantities will be "visually" weighed, and free food consumption will be accepted. There are no prohibited food, with the sole exception of junk-food. Flexibility does not mean you can indulge in everything: it means searching for alternative viable ways to achieve an equally satisfactory result, understanding that we are at the center of our diet and not the other way round.

T = Tone

Being muscularly toned is one of the cornerstones of the GIFT diet, which targets burning increase rather than lowering ingested calories. If the body has an active metabolism (which can be obtained by eating according to the rules, and moving!) it will not only consume all the exceeding fat, but will also get quickly rid of leftovers and metabolic waste. A healthy and moderate physical activity results in a physical and mental cascading effect on our well-being as well as on the scale. The diet alone cannot enable us to lose weight permanently if it is not matched with enough metabolic activation. Being active does not mean "to be forced" to do something, but simply get back to what we are, in harmony with our evolutionary, genetic heritage.

This first introductory lesson, which we'll refer to as the lesson # 1, contains all the basic settings and is therefore essential for a correct understanding of the entire course. At the end of the lesson, variables on which we work will be clearer, and will permit to get an overall idea of what we offer to our patients in the everyday clinical practice.

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

The GIFT diet is characterized by a number of distinguishing elements: it's important to understand them and insert them gradually in the individual's daily routines. Furthermore they involve a direct, psychophysical participation without which any efforts can lose its effectiveness in producing the desired results: nobody will do for you what you are not willing to do.

Let's start by showing you the "pillars" on which all the GIFT rules are based:

- Normal calorie amount
- Normal protein amount
- Leptin as a metabolic activation signal
- Meal distribution over the day
- Physical activation
- Insulin calmness
- Quality of nutrients

NORMAL CALORIE INTAKE

The first information we convey to patients is that we won't count the calories of any meal. Doing that instead will result in a loss of freedom, in experiencing the diet as a "prison". One of the most important pillar of the GIFT diet is the normal calorie intake, i.e. to provide the body with the right amount of calories, according to individual needs. But how do you lose weight without cutting calories, you'd say? The calorie balance supporters have been defending for years their theories based on the belief that "a calorie is still a calorie", therefore reducing the calorie intake or increasing consumption should help people to weight loss. This concept is absolutely wrong from the biological food effects perspective. In fact, depending on if thyroid hormones transform the food energy into usable energy (ATP), or, at least in part, into just heat, our body responses can be a lot different. In the first case the exceeded produced ATP can be stored, in the second heat is "wasted" to warm the body or just to be dispersed. Evidently from the point of view of fat storage a calorie is not equal to another when its intake conditions are different (by time, by current metabolic situation, other food combination, by nutrient composition). So, even if it is true that weight loss occurs when the calorie intake is less than calories burnt, it is also true that it's possible to work for adapting to the natural body tendencies rather than against them, to get the same results.



Science is the only
defense against
fake information

NORMAL PROTEIN INTAKE

Another foundation of GIFT Diet is the normal protein intake concept, that is the proper protein intake. Proteins are the building blocks of the entire body; too low protein intake prevents muscle growth and thus metabolism. Of course humans are perfectly capable to survive with fewer proteins than the ideal needs (in fact vegetarians and vegans do "survive" very well), but in this condition they won't be able to lose weight, if the goal is to lose weight in terms of an actual, steady fat loss, with a proper restoration of body muscular mass as planned by our evolutionary project.

In the Paleolithic, meat supply was a luxury option, available only through hunting (successful hunting) or focused gathering (of eggs, insects). The gathering consumption (by weak, sick, disabled, or sedentary women nursing infants) consisted instead in just carbohydrates (fruits, roots, seeds, herbs). Hunters could and should therefore be thin to express the maximum efficiency in the capture of preys. They also had to possess powerful, springing muscles, and high reaction speed. On the contrary weak individuals or women burdened with children had to get extra provisions, to prevent famine, certainly more likely for those who could not hunt actively. That's why the protein intake, even today, generates a weight loss, tone and thermogenesis hypothalamic signal.

But how much protein do we need?

According to WHO, a healthy adult individual in normal circumstances needs about 0.8-1.0 g of protein per body weight kilos every day. That is: an individual whose weight is 70 kg will need about 70 g of protein a day. The data is not much questionable because it comes from the analysis of nitrogen compound residues in the urine (which are proportional to the daily protein turnover) and is therefore representative of the actual intake in healthy and normal people. With the terms healthy and normal we mean to exclude cases where the nitrogen balance can be altered, such as during pregnancy, lactation, growth, returning from a low-calorie diet or from anorexia, practicing professional sports. In all these cases the protein amounts should be increased proportionally even up to 2-2,5 g. After having introduced the concepts of normal protein and normal calorie intake we will now show you what path GIFT Diet will follow to induce weight loss: the metabolic activation.

What is metabolism? (try giving an answer before proceeding)

Metabolism is the set of physical and chemical reactions, both anabolic and catabolic, which take place inside an organism. These matter transformations are related to all the body functions: from body temperature regulation, to the digestive, liver, cardiac and other functionality efficiency, from the body reconstruction activities to the immune system actions.

With an active metabolism an organism works at full capacity: burning eaten calories, eliminating metabolic wastes, repairing damaged tissues, with mental speed and brilliance and the ability to express himself physically.

A lazy metabolism, on the contrary, means slow calorie consumption, mental and physical indolence, endogenous metabolites accumulation (the so called toxins), slow recovery and - ultimately - easy fattening and weight loss inability. But who's responsible of our metabolic activation?

LEPTIN, THE METABOLIC ACTIVATION SIGNAL

Leptin, from greek leptos "thin" is a hormone discovered by Friedman in 1994, during his experiments on laboratory animals to induce weight loss. It is an adipokine naturally secreted by adipose tissue as a result of complete nutrition and represents the most important hypothalamic signal to regulate energy balance and leading the body to calorie burning rather than fat storing and energy saving. Once the leptin signal gets correctly to the hypothalamus (an important structure of our brain), the message radiates to other areas assigned to specific functions. Let's examine them:

- a correct satiety response to food intake, mediated by the neuropeptide Y (NPY)
- a proper stress response mediated by CRH and ACTH (adrenal glands)
- [a balanced activation of the thyroid via TRH and TSH which allows the rapid consumption of any food excess in the form of heat](#)
- [a strong activation of GH \(growth hormone\) responsible for muscles, bones, ligament and tendon protection](#)
- [FSH and LH \(ovaries and testicles\) activation to protect testosterone \(muscle mass, fat control\) levels and the female cycle associated hormone levels.](#)
- A modulation of the immune system in the anti-inflammatory sense via alpha-MSH.

Leptin is perhaps the most important regulator, the "conductor" of a signaling molecules concert that regulate our body. They will be treated in detail in the following lessons, this is just a short description.

Ghrelin: is secreted by the empty stomach to report a condition of poor nutrition, thereby generating a starvation response, and at the same time, affecting the body's anabolic activity through either specific receptors or indirectly enhancing leptin sensitivity in the hypothalamus .

ADIPONECTIN AND RESISTIN: also secreted by adipocytes, working in opposite directions to correct (adiponectin) or to increase (resistin) insulin resistance. Adiponectin is also able to quickly dissolve stored fat in the fat cells.

CHOLECYSTOKININ: secreted from the small intestine in response to fat intake, it slows the food passage from the stomach to the duodenum, allowing a more complete absorption of nutrients and sending satiety signals to the brain.

GLP-1 (glucagon like peptide-1) produced by the intestine, promotes insulin-like action for getting glucose to peripheral cells. Therefore if we do not eat enough, leptin will fail to properly inform the hypothalamus and the body will be forced to decrease consumption and stop muscle development as well as reproductive function in order to preserve its own fat storage.

Our evolutionary history will provide an explanation for that.

During the history of our evolution, we have always been more afraid of hunger than of overabundance. Our body "acts" in evolution terms (this is a main concept of the GIFT Diet).

From a biological point of view we still are very similar to that primitive ancestor of ours who used to hunt and gather in the African valleys more than a million years ago: our biological responses and our physical and psychological mechanisms are still the same. When it comes to eating, we do so without hesitation (opportunities for plenty of food, that time, were surely not so frequent), but as soon as we lack a bit of food we preserve what we already have (and our stored fat as well) as if it were the most precious treasure. This "way of thinking" has saved our life in the past a thousand times: today it might shorten it dramatically unless we understand this simple body dynamics.

Most diets that imply a greater or smaller caloric restriction ignore or overlook that as soon as the food intake decreases, the body will respond by slowing consumption.

An example to illustrate the concept.

To better understand the implications of what has been said, we can imagine the assimilation and consumption mechanism like a tub where water level represents the ideal amount of food eaten. The water stream represents the amount of food we take, while the drain hole is what we consume.

Basing one's diet on rigid calorie calculations means to think with naive simplicity that the body is a metal machine equipped with mechanical responses, that is, it's just a matter of reducing the water stream tap to solve the problem. On the contrary that is not true: as soon as the water stream decreases, even before any effect can be seen, the body reacts by narrowing the exit hole, in anticipation of a possible future famine. This will result not only in failing to lose weight (to achieve this with that system you would actually need to almost stop the water, at the cost of enormous psychophysical sacrifices), but also in dangerously slowing the overall metabolic rate of your body. When the water will return to normal flow it will take long before the body enlarges back the hole to its initial size (the above mentioned "caution" principle). During this time the body will regain, gram by gram, every weight molecule lost with hard work, resulting in a severe frustration in those who underwent great sacrifices, perhaps for months. What's worse, with serious health risks due to the continuous weight oscillations, now correlated with cardiovascular risk even more than just obesity.

"So many times I have experienced (as a spectator or really firsthand!) this frustrating sequence of low calorie diet + weight loss + weight regain (perhaps with interests) ... maybe it could depend on precisely this "opposite reaction" triggered by the body ..."

Then let's keep in mind that they are not the calories that make you lose or gain weight: they are the "bricks" used by the hypothalamus to obey the signals it receives. We gain or lose weight because the hypothalamic signals are incorrect.

The induction of a correct leptin signal (the purpose of which is to maintain high energy consumption, giving the ability to eat in a healthy and balanced way even on a weight loss diet), is obtained by physical activation and by a correct distribution of meals across the day. We'll examine in details these two important points in the specific related lessons. Suffice it to say, for the moment, that the application of both principles leads to a stable and permanent increase of the daily energy consumption, not only accelerating weight loss but also positively awakening the whole organism, with considerable, both physically and mentally cascading effects.

For the rest of the lesson and for the rest of the course, contact:
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