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15 DARN THINGS KEEPING YOU FAT OR SICK

BY RENUKA PATEL

This guide reveals 15 sneaky, everyday habits and hidden health traps that could be sabotaging your energy, metabolism, and overall well-being—without you even realizing it.

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1 -Metabolism Slowing, Fad Diets & Calorie Restriction

The old “calories in vs. calories out” model doesn’t tell the full story—**metabolic rates vary from person to person.**

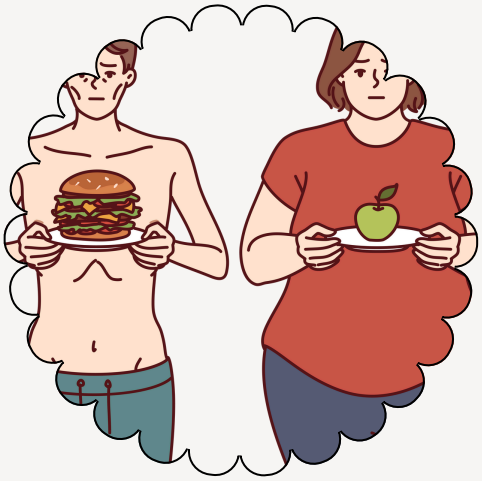
Weight loss isn’t just math - it’s metabolism and hormones.

- Metabolisms vary - A JAMA study showed people on a low-carb diet burned up to 300 more calories a day than those eating more carbs, even with higher calorie intake.
- Research on Biggest Loser participants showed their metabolisms never fully recovered. Because of extreme calorie restriction, their bodies adapted hormonally — slowing metabolism and driving the body to regain weight.

And here’s a twist: we often get hungrier because we’re fatter.

When you carry excess fat but can’t tap into it for energy, your brain still thinks you’re starving — so it cranks up hunger, even though plenty is stored.

The goal isn’t to eat less — it’s to retrain your body to burn fat for fuel.



2 – Digestive Disorders

Digestive issues are more than just uncomfortable—they can seriously impact your weight, metabolism, and overall health. From imbalances in gut microbiome to chronic inflammation, your gut plays a major role in how your body stores fat, manages hunger, and impacts your overall health

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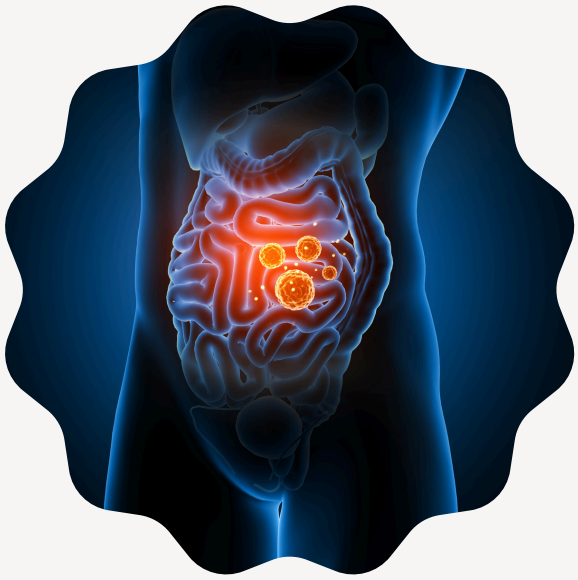
- Digestive imbalances are a major cause of **bloating**, which can be both uncomfortable and visibly expand the belly—**sometimes causing temporary weight fluctuations of several pounds."**

- **Chronic inflammation** in the gut can disrupt hormones, trigger fluid retention, and contribute not only to long-term weight gain but also to overall poor health.

- While some digestive disorders may cause weight loss, **most contribute to weight gain** through malabsorption, inflammation, and changes in metabolism.

- An unhealthy gut microbiome -- has been linked to **insulin resistance, inflammation, hormone disruptions, and weight gain.**



Yes, your gut bacteria can actually make it easier to gain weight, even if you're not eating more.

3 – Chemicals That Make You Fat or Sick

Everyday chemicals in our environment—even at trace amounts—can disrupt your hormones and quietly contribute to weight gain and poor health. Though it's gaining attention now, the effects of chemicals have been known in the pharmaceutical world for decades.

Common offenders include:

- Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs): Found in pesticides, fire retardants, and industrial waste. High levels = 38x higher risk of insulin resistance.
  - Avoiding plastics and harmful products isn't "sensitive"—it's smart.
- Organochlorines: Pesticides and solvents that disrupt key hormones like thyroid, estrogen, insulin, leptin and more.
- Phthalates: Found in personal care items, meds, plastics, toys—especially harmful as they degrade.
- BPA: In cans, packaging, plastics, and receipts. Linked to hormone disruption, cancer, and neurological issues.

Quick Tips to Reduce Exposure:

✓ Choose organic meats and fats (toxins store in fat)
✓ Wash produce; go organic when you can
✓ Avoid microwaving in plastic—use glass instead
✓ Use non-toxic cookware (glass, ceramic, stainless steel)
✓ Drink from glass or stainless containers

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4 – Leptin Resistance

Leptin is a hormone made by fat cells that signals the brain when we have enough energy—reducing appetite and increasing activity. It can be easily measured through blood tests, yet it's often overlooked in weight loss struggles.

When leptin resistance develops, the brain no longer "hears" the signal, even though plenty of fat is stored. Hunger increases, metabolism slows, and the body acts as if it's in starvation mode—this "set point" effect" helps explain why weight often comes back after loss.

Normally, leptin works in a feedback loop:

- Eating ↑ body fat ↑ leptin → eat less, move more
- Fasting ↓ body fat ↓ leptin → eat more, move less

This loop keeps weight stable. But with leptin resistance, the message gets lost. The brain can't "hear" the leptin signal anymore, even though there's plenty of fat stored.

Common causes:

- Chronically high leptin (fat → more fat)
- Inflammation
- High-sugar/high-starch diet
- Stress or hormonal imbalance
- Poor sleep

Helpful approaches:

- Sustainable weight loss to lower leptin (while managing its resistance)
- Strategic "metabolic shifts"
- Supplementation support

5 – Antibiotics & Gut Flora

Antibiotics (Ab) are widely used in livestock—not just to treat disease, but also to prevent infection and promote faster growth by altering gut bacteria. This "growth switch" effect helps animals gain weight—profitable for ranchers but problematic for us. Antibiotics used in livestock can enter our food supply.

Research shows that antibiotic-related weight gain effects can persist and even increase with age. Obese vs. lean individuals have distinctly different gut bacteria profiles. We inherit our gut flora from our mothers, and antibiotic use—especially during pregnancy—can disrupt that foundation, increasing the risk of weight gain later in life.

Key points:

- Probiotics don't permanently add to your "home team" microbes, but can support balance and improve gut function.
- Healthy gut pH is essential—your stomach should be acidic (low pH).
- Antibiotics can reduce or eliminate certain bacterial strains; in some cases, fecal transplants are used to restore diversity.

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6 – Stress

The “fight or flight” response is the body’s built-in survival system. In short bursts, it’s helpful—giving you the energy to respond to danger. But when stress becomes constant, that same system turns against you. Chronic stress keeps cortisol elevated, which can promote fat storage—especially around the midsection and contribute to chronic illness.

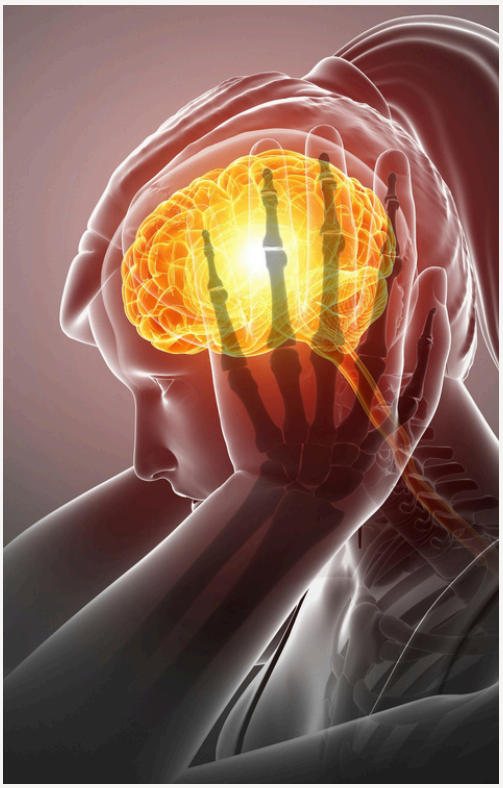
Over time, chronic stress can:

- Increase blood sugar and insulin levels
- Slow thyroid function, lowering metabolism
- Damage the gut lining (leaky gut) and trigger inflammation
- Lead to hormonal balance
- Increase cravings for sugar and high-fat foods, driving overeating

Bottom line: The body loses weight only when it feels safe—managing stress is as important as diet and exercise.

Simple ways to calm your stress response:

- Prioritize sleep — aim for 7–8 hours to reset cortisol levels
- Practice slow, deep breathing or meditation daily
- Move your body gently — walking, yoga, or stretching lower stress hormones
- Keep blood sugar steady with balanced meals (protein, fiber, healthy fats)



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7 – Medications That Cause Weight Gain

Certain prescription drugs can make weight loss more difficult by altering metabolism, increasing appetite, or changing how the body stores fat.

Common culprits include:

- Antidepressants (SSRIs, anti-psychotics, tricyclics)
- MAOIs
- Beta blockers
- Birth control pills
- Prednisone

If you've struggled with unexplained weight changes, review your medications with your provider—sometimes the cause is chemical, not lack of willpower.

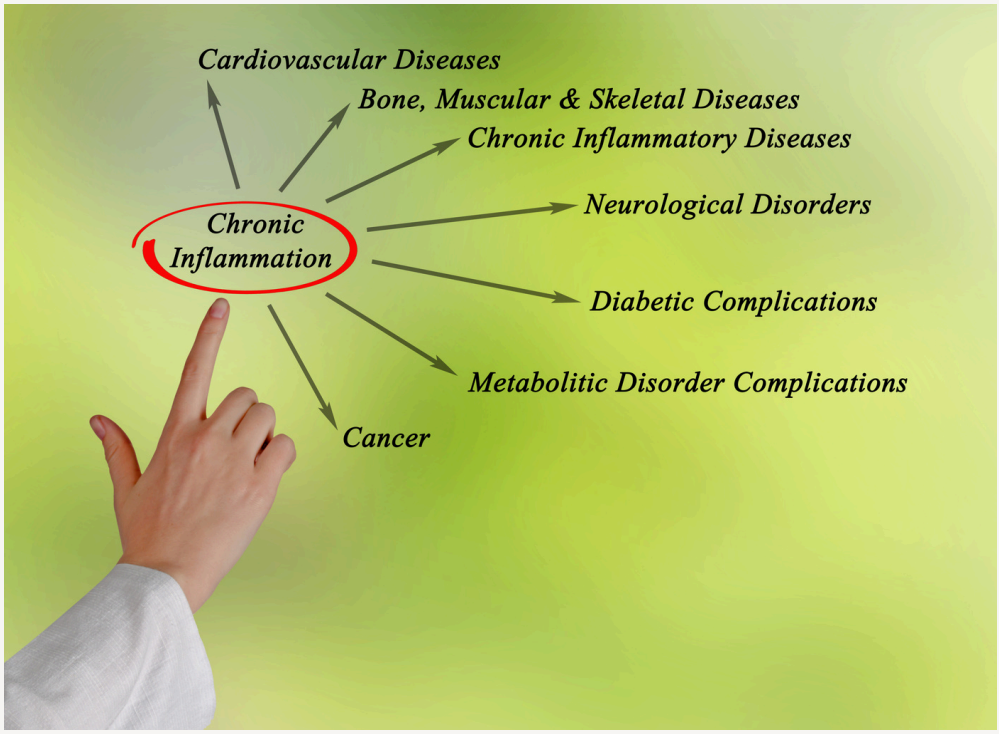
8 – Inflammation

Chronic inflammation is the body's silent alarm — a defense system meant to protect you, but when it stays activated too long, it starts causing harm. It can be measured through blood markers, waist circumference, and symptoms like fatigue, joint pain, or brain fog.

Common drivers of chronic inflammation include:

- Insulin Resistance—major but overlooked cause.
- Processed foods (refined sugar, seed oils, trans fats)
- Environmental toxins (pesticides, plastics, pollutants)
- Chronic stress (constantly elevated cortisol)
- Gut dysbiosis and leaky gut
- Poor sleep and inactivity

Here's what happens inside the body:
Ongoing triggers keep the immune system in defense mode. Immune cells attack damaged tissue or fatty deposits, releasing inflammatory chemicals like IL-6 and TNF-alpha. When this "clean-up" response doesn't shut off, it becomes chronic —causing inflammation throughout the body, leading to weight gain and chronic illness.



Simple ways to lower inflammation:

- Eat mostly whole, unprocessed foods
- Prioritize quality sleep (7–8 hours nightly)
- Move your body daily—walking, yoga, or stretching counts
- Manage stress through deep breathing, meditation, or mindfulness
- Support gut health with fiber, hydration, and probiotics
- Reduce toxin exposure by avoiding plastics and using clean products

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9 – Sugar & Simple Carbohydrates

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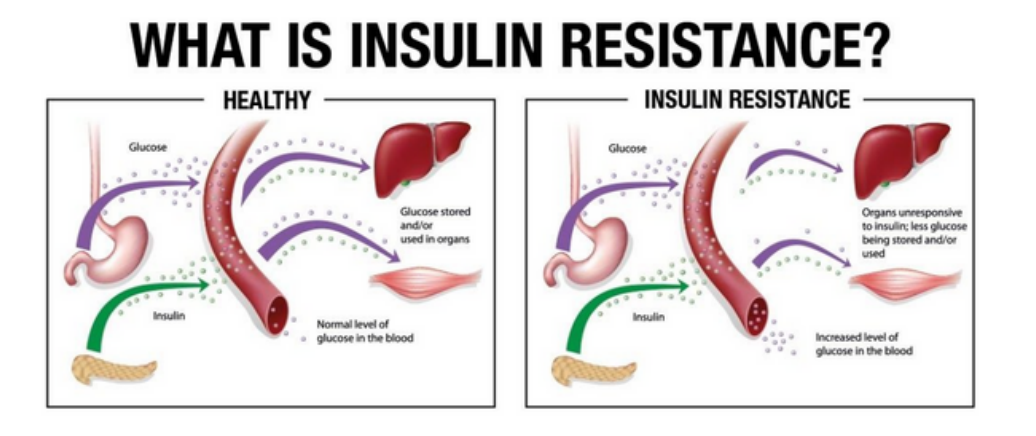
How Sugar Affects the Body

Eating sugar and refined carbs quickly raises blood sugar levels. The pancreas releases insulin—the hormone that moves sugar from the blood into cells for energy.

Quick Facts: Sugar, Insulin & Disease

- Sugar intake has skyrocketed—from ~4 lbs/year in the 1940s to over 100 lbs/year today.
- High sugar and insulin levels are linked to obesity, high blood pressure, cholesterol, and depression.
- Fructose (especially from HFCS and agave) turns to fat quickly and strains the liver like alcohol.
- 68% of seniors with diabetes die from heart disease; 16% from stroke.
- Diabetes can shorten lifespan by 4–23 years.
- Alzheimer's is now often called "Type 3 Diabetes."



When sugar intake stays high, the body produces more and more insulin over time. Eventually, cells stop responding to insulin's signal, so sugar can't enter the cells to be used for energy. This leaves sugar trapped in the bloodstream, leading to fat storage, fatigue, weight gain, and increased risk for diabetes.

Over time, this constant rise in insulin and blood sugar affects nearly every system in the body.

Impacts of High Blood Sugar

- Thinning hair
- PCOS
- Cancer (glucose fuels tumor growth)
- Alzheimer's ("Type 3 Diabetes")
- Mood changes and poor sleep
- Reduced immunity (blood sugar >120 can lower white blood cell function by 75% for days, raising infection risk)
- Sluggish thyroid function
- Fatty liver disease
- Accelerated aging (insulin is highly inflammatory)

Avoid This / Choose This Instead

❌ Refined carbs & sugars: white bread, pasta, pastries, soda, juice, cereals

✅ Better choices: fiber-rich carbs (vegetables, berries, oats, quinoa), healthy fats, and proteins

❌ High-fructose or artificial sweeteners: agave, corn syrup, aspartame

✅ Better options: stevia, monk fruit, raw honey, or maple syrup (in moderation)

Train Your Body to Burn Fat

- Lower refined carbs and added sugar
- Space meals every 3–5 hrs for proper digestion
- Include healthy fats + exercise
- Don't skip meals, especially breakfast
- Support your body's balance and blood sugar with nutrient-rich foods and targeted nutrients

Balancing blood sugar isn't just about weight — it's about energy, hormones, and long-term health

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10 – Modern Food Industry

🧠 Our bodies haven't changed much, but the way we grow, process, and package food has—and it's quietly reshaping our health.

Food Degradation

- Preservatives, pesticides, and shelf-life demands strip nutrition.
- 📊 Then vs. now: 131 lbs vs. 11 lbs of veggies per year.
- Spinach today has half the Vitamin C and ~1/75th the iron of 1948.

- **Dairy, Eggs & Meat** 🐄
- 100 years ago: local, pasture-raised, no hormones or GMO feed.
- Today: billions of animals in factory farms, exposed to chemicals and poor conditions.
- Best: organic, grass-fed, local.

- **Fruits & Vegetables** 🥦
- Far fewer nutrients than 50–100 years ago.
- 🌾 Fertilizers, pesticides, GMOs, and soli depletion have stripped nutrients from our food—even organic produce.
- Best: organic, farmers' markets, grow your own, or follow EWG's "Dirty Dozen/Clean Fifteen."

- **Processed Foods** 🍪
- Anything packaged = processed.
- Fast food/convenience = nutrient-poor, often toxic.
- GMOs, additives, unhealthy fats, plastic packaging, long shelf life = "anti-nutrients."

Best: make treats at home with whole ingredients 🥗

The result? Even when we eat 'healthy,' today's food often delivers fewer nutrients and more chemical burden than ever before–so focus on eating fresh, local, and nutrient-dense food whenever you can.

11 – Hormones

Hormones are the body's chemical messengers—working in harmony to regulate energy, metabolism, and weight. When they fall out of sync, the result isn't just fatigue or weight gain — it's inflammation, poor recovery, and that persistent 'off' feeling many people live with

⚖️ How Hormones Wreak Havoc on Your Health:

- Thyroid hormones (T3, T4): The body's "metabolic engine"—fueling every cell with energy. Even a 30% drop in blood T3 can reduce tissue levels by up to 70–80%, leading to sluggish metabolism and fatigue.
- Cortisol: The stress hormone; chronically high levels suppress thyroid conversion (T4→T3), and slow metabolism—promoting fat storage and exhaustion.
- Insulin: Moves sugar into cells for energy; chronically high level promotes fat storage and inflammation.
- Leptin & ghrelin: Regulate hunger and fullness cues.
- Estrogen & progesterone: impact mood, metabolism & fat storage.
- Xenoestrogens: Estrogen-like toxins from plastics, pesticides, and personal care products that disrupt hormone balance.

Common Causes of Hormonal Imbalance

- Nutrient deficiencies
- Toxic exposures
- Gut or liver dysfunction
- Chronic stress
- Insulin resistance
- Extreme dieting or over-exercise

✅ Bottom Line:

Hormones work together in harmony. When one system falters, it creates a ripple effect that throws the others off balance. Balance begins with real food, stress management, movement, and toxin reduction. When hormones align, energy rises, metabolism improves, and that "stuck" feeling fades.

12 – Sleep

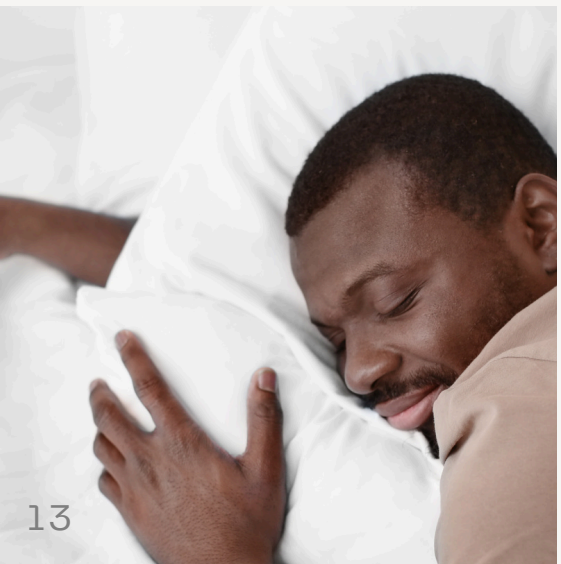
Why Sleep Matters:

Lack of sleep, late bedtimes, or sleep apnea interfere with the body's natural repair and detox systems. Sleep is critical for physical and mental restoration—especially for the brain's glymphatic system, which clears waste during deep sleep. Both timing and duration are essential for optimal health.

Sleep Strategies:

1. **Schedule sleep consistently** – go to bed and wake up at the same time daily (even on weekends) to reset your internal clock.
2. **Avoid stimulants before bed** – avoid caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, or sports drinks 4–6 hours before sleep. Start winding down in the evening.
3. **Limit screens** – avoid TV, laptops, and phones before bed. If unavoidable, use blue-light glasses or night mode. Blue light suppresses melatonin.
4. **Create a sleep oasis** – keep the room cool (60–75°F), dark, quiet, and comfortable. Consider blackout curtains, white noise, and keeping pets out if needed.
5. **Exercise early** – exercise before 3 pm to promote uninterrupted sleep.
6. **Evening wind-down** – unwind with light reading, a warm bath, or meditation. Avoid stressful or stimulating activities; write down worries and let them go.
7. **Evening snack** – a protein/fat-based snack can help stabilize blood sugar overnight. Avoid eating close to bedtime

👉 Good Sleep = Recovery + Balance + Renewal



13 – Estrogen Dominance

Estrogen dominance isn't always about having "too much" estrogen—it's more often an imbalance between estrogen and progesterone.

Common Causes:

- Diet: high carbs, low fiber, low healthy fats, processed food
- Chronic Stress
- Obesity: body fat >28% produces more estrogen
- Liver congestion: impaired estrogen clearance
- Environment toxins: plastics, pesticides, chemical exposures

Approach:

- Take hormone supplements only if recommended by your provider.
- Focus on root causes — balance blood sugar, lower inflammation, and support your body's natural detox and hormone pathways.
- Weight loss & blood sugar balance via FYS, keto, or any plan suited to your body
- Support your liver and gut to help clear excess hormones, eat clean whole foods, reduce toxin exposure, and keep digestion regular for better balance.

💡 Want deeper insight?
A DUTCH hormone test can reveal how your body processes estrogen — showing if your detox or methylation pathways need extra support.

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14 – Trauma

Trauma doesn't just live in the mind—it imprints on the body. It can manifests in many ways, including physical symptoms: tense muscles, high heart rate, difficulty sleeping, elevated cortisol, and altered brain wiring (PTSD).

Some survivors of sexual abuse may unconsciously gain weight to protect themselves from unwanted attention.

How Early Experiences Shape Health

- What happens in childhood doesn't stay in childhood—The ACE Study shows that early trauma can shape lifelong health—raising the risk for chronic illness, obesity, and emotional struggles later in life.
- Trauma doesn't just live in memories—it lives in the body. Unresolved trauma can keep the nervous system on high alert, tightening muscles, spiking cortisol, and slowing healing. This constant "survival mode" disrupts hormones, sleep, and metabolism—making it harder to feel calm, focused, or lose weight.
- Some who have experience trauma may become natural caregivers—pouring energy into helping others while quietly neglecting themselves.

Restoring Safety & Balance

True healing begins when the body feels safe again.

- Physical healing alone can only go so far—unresolved trauma continues to drive stress chemistry until it's addressed.
- Calming the nervous system through mindfulness, therapy, breathwork, or somatic practices helps release stored tension and reset the brain's stress response—so your body can finally rest, repair, and thrive.
- Healing also means nourishing your body with balanced meals, restorative sleep, movement, yoga, meditation and self-care.

15 – Epigenetics & Genetics

Epigenetics is how your lifestyle and environment influence how your genes behave—without changing the genes themselves. Think of it like light switches that can be turned "on" or "off"

Research has shown that The effects of trauma, stress, or nutrition can echo for generations.

- During the Dutch famine, babies born to starving mothers grew up with higher rates of obesity and diabetes.
- Holocaust survivors' children show higher stress sensitivity (PTSD risk).
- Poor nutrition or chronic stress during pregnancy can "program" higher risks for obesity, insulin resistance, or heart disease later in life.
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Genetics gives us our blueprint–it contributes roughly 20–30% of our traits (some argue up to 70%).

Traits most influenced by genes:

1. Obesity/height
2. Schizophrenia
3. Type 2 diabetes
4. Hypertension
5. Alcoholism
6. Heart disease

✅ Bottom Line:

Even if your genetics or epigenetics create challenges, understanding them gives insight and control. With the right nutrition, movement, and lifestyle choices, you can turn down the effects of less favorable genes and turn up the ones that support your health.

Ready to Get Started?

Book your FREE Consultation Now!

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