



# WEIGHT ★ NO ★ MORE DIET CENTER <sup>SM</sup>



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## THE SKINNY ON FAT CELLS

They are the building blocks of flab, the payback for cheesecake, the bloated little sacks of grease that make more of us—more than we can fit into our pants! Scorned and despised, they are sucked out surgically by the billions from bulging backsides and bellies. And still they come.

Scientists used to think fat cells were pretty much just an oily storage compartment, but in the past decade research has shown that fat cells are actually little chemical factories and that body fat is potent stuff: a highly active tissue that secretes hormones and other substances with profound and oftentimes harmful effects on metabolism, weight and overall health. In recent years, biologists have begun calling fat an “endocrine organ,” comparing it to glands such as the thyroid and pituitary, both of which also release hormones straight into the bloodstream. But, unlike those other glands, fat has a seemingly infinite capacity to make more of it. Too much body fat can act like a poison, spewing out substances that contribute to diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke and other illnesses, including some cancers.

We all have a different number of fat cells. Our first set of fat cells is formed when we are a fetus in our mothers’ third trimester of pregnancy; our second set of fat cells is formed at the onset of puberty when the hormones (estrogen and testosterone) kick in. It is during puberty that the differences in fat distribution between men and women begin to take form, and the number of fat cells is usually determined by the time we reach young adulthood. Once numbers are determined, they are never reduced. When we “lose weight,” what actually happens is that we burn fat stored within our cells, the amount of fat in the cells decrease and the fat cells simply shrink in volume. A lean adult has about 40 billion fat cells. An obese adult not only has at least two to three times that many, but their fat cells are much larger than the cells in lean adults. Even worse, the body can always make more. Through severe and prolonged obesity, when all present fat cells are filled to capacity, new fat cells can continue to be created in order to provide additional storage. A severely obese individual can have as many as 300 billion fat cells!

Our total number of fat cells are both *subcutaneous* fat cells and *visceral* fat cells. *Subcutaneous* means they’re right under the skin, surrounding the body; this is the fat you can see when you look in the mirror. *Visceral* fat refers to the fat located deeper within the body, inside the abdomen. Anybody with a belly has visceral fat, and the more you have, the worse off you are. Visceral fat is more active, spews out more toxic substances, and its secretions go straight to the liver and interferes with its functions, which include helping to regulate blood glucose and cholesterol.

There are no quick fixes to ridding the body of fat cells. Liposuction only removes subcutaneous fat and has no affect whatsoever on health. Weight loss through proper diet and exercise, however, almost always results in significant changes in blood pressure, cholesterol and insulin resistance. Liposuction does not shrink the many more fat cells left behind. Weight loss through proper diet and exercise is the only way to rid oneself of visceral fat and shrink those cells. Nothing else will do it.

The number of fat cells you possess will certainly influence how difficult it will be for you to lose body fat. But no matter how many fat cells we have we all have the physical potential to reduce our body fat. For some people, especially those with large numbers of fat cells, it may just take more time. But losing weight now—TODAY— can put an immediate stop to any potential increase in your fat cell numbers. What are you waiting for?