

# **Natural Remedies for Losing Weight**

## **Part 2**

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## Leptoprin

The bottom line with natural remedies for losing weight is that if you stop taking them, the weight comes back. You have not learned anything about how to properly lose weight and maintain your loss. You have tricked your body into perhaps losing some fat and likely some water - but have not addressed the underlying causes as to why you may be overweight in the first place. If there actually were a diet pill that worked for the long term you can bet major drug companies would be selling them. They aren't!

Leptoprin (Anorex) has Calcium Phosphate, Commiphora mukul extract, Garcinia cambogia (HCA 125mg), L-Tyrosine, Acetylsalicylic acid - 162.5mg, Dipotassium phosphate, Sodium phosphate, Disodium phosphate, Phosphatidyl choline, Scutellaria (root), Bupleurum (root), Epimedium (herb). You might be asking, as you should, why a diet product would have aspirin in it (something people on Coumadin dare not take).

Leptoprin is something called a Stack. The ECA (ephedra, caffeine and aspirin) stack is supposedly a thermogenic product - meaning it supposedly melts your fat away by boosting your metabolism. And while it may boost your metabolism, it is more than likely to give you a bad case of the jitters with two stimulants tag teamed together. It's like taking speed, as there is only a minimal difference between methamphetamine and ephedrine/ephedra.

The side effects for a product like this are many - irregular or accelerated heart beat, insomnia, elevated blood pressure, seizures etc. And yet these products are labeled all natural. This is misleading as people then think they are also harmless. Again, as with any natural remedies, read the labels, search for the names of the list ingredients on the Internet, check for drug interactions, talk to your Doctor and/or your Pharmacist. If you're considering taking something like this, it is better to be well informed, and have your Doctor know what you are doing. In the long run, you would best be served by a visit to your local Weight Watchers group and find out how they can help you with a truly natural weight loss program.

## **Guar Gum**

So many people these days want a magic bullet to lose weight, actually fervently pray for such a thing. Unfortunately, there really is NO magic bullet for weight loss, other than good old hard work to make it happen. No matter what else you choose to do, you still need to change your eating habits, and increase your exercise. Why are these natural remedies for losing weight so popular?

There are numerous reasons why the natural weight loss industry does a booming business every year. Over weight and obese people want something they can lose weight with immediately. It's easier than doing the grunt work. They have decided they don't want to be fat any longer and want instant results. They may have tried other weight loss avenues and given up. Herbal remedies are easy to obtain without a prescription. They appeal to people because of the outrageous claims made about weight loss. People think natural can't hurt you and that natural means safe - and it doesn't.

Hundreds of weight loss products have soluble fiber in them, meaning in theory, the fiber will absorb water in your gut, decreasing your appetite, making you feel full and not eat as much. Guar gum (from the cluster bean *Cyamopsis tetragonolobus*) is one of these fibers used as a natural remedy for losing weight. The guar seeds are dehusked, milled and screened to obtain the guar gum. Normally, you would find this thickening agent in foods, dairy products, sauces and ice cream. Used in food it is quite easy for the body to assimilate it. Used in diet concoctions, that is another kettle of fish.

Since it is capable of swelling up to 10 to 20 times in the stomach when taken with fluids, it is supposed to make you feel full, cut your appetite, making you eat less, and thus losing weight. Unfortunately, there have been many instances of esophageal blockages with this product. Like Glucomannan, Guar gum has also led to gastrointestinal obstructions. Research indicates that this product was banned in the US in over-the-counter natural remedies for losing weight in the late 1980s. In addition, Guar gum was also proved ineffective in losing weight. However, with the exploding weight loss market, always be sure to read labels before you buy something. You will find that many things are called by other names and if you do not know what they are, you could buy something that will either be a waste of your money, or cause you more problems than you ever wanted.

## **Garcinia (hydroxycitric Acid - Hca)**

Garcinia Cambogia hails from India and Southeast Asia and is a pumpkin shaped fruit with a chemical structure similar to citric acid. Also called Malabar Tamarind, you will find this as a condiment in curry dishes.

HCA apparently does reduce appetites and promotes weight loss in animals, as proven by several studies. However, when humans were studied, it was found HCA did not burn excess calories. In fact, it was labeled as no better than a sugar pill. Many claims on diet and weight loss remedy packages insist there are no side effects for HCA. No one seems to be sure whether there is or isn't which doesn't bode well for HCA as a natural remedy for losing weight.

Bottom line? It's really unclear whether or not HCA offers weight loss benefits or not. The best that can be said about it is that it likely won't hurt you, although no real studies have been done addressing whether or not it's safe to take long term, or take at all. One double blind study found of 60 overweight people who used 440 mg of HCA 3 times a day showed weight loss. Yet another study (also double blind) of 135 overweight individuals who got either 500 mg of HCA or a placebo 3 times a day bombed out - showed no effects re: weight loss. The best available data today shows this product is not effective for weight loss.

You will definitely have to think long and hard about this particular product, even if you choose to use it in combination with another weight loss remedy. If you are going to be spending money to buy products with dubious track records, then you are likely getting what you paid for. Try and thoroughly research HCA or any other natural remedy for losing weight to find out the pros and the cons before you take a leap of faith into something that might not work.

## Herbal Diuretics

Hundreds upon hundreds of people have at one time or another struggled to lose weight. It's a really important issue for many since society places such value on being thin. Do you realize that over 300,000 people a month search the Internet using the term weight loss?

Billions of dollars have been spent on weight loss and the weight loss industry is making money hand over fist. Oddly enough, even though there are all these natural remedies for losing weight on the market, obesity is on the rise. People and children are fatter than ever. The natural weight loss remedies gear themselves to people just like this - praying on their dreams to be thinner, their frustration at not being able to lose and their confusion over what will or will not work for them.

If you have ever read any of the labels for natural weight loss products, you'll likely realize more than half the ingredients have names you likely do not recognize. And most definitely you will not know how they interact with one another, and with any drugs you may be taking. That's the bad news. The good news is you can lose weight, but you need to do it the old fashioned way - change your diet and get exercise. There is simply no way around that.

Back to reading labels, and trying to figure out what is in the product you are looking at. Many of the over-the-counter weight loss products have a variety of herbal diuretics in them, and most of them are derived from caffeine (which is a stimulant). Some of them have juniper seeds (can cause renal failure), equistone (a neurotoxin - can cause brain damage), horse tail or shave grass (convulsions/hyperactivity). There is also dandelion, hawthorn and green tea.

By themselves, herbal diuretics don't provide enough water shedding to give you an effective water weight loss. And while not considered to be toxic (on their own) when mixed with a variety of other compounds they can have serious interactions with drugs you may be taking already to achieve weight loss (like Lasix). In addition if you are on lithium or digoxin herbal diuretics have a history of interacting with these medications.

Herbal diuretics trick you into thinking you are getting thinner. You're not. You are merely losing water weight. If you take these kinds of products too long, the loss of water will leach sodium and potassium from your body. The best method to achieve the same effect is drink lots of purified water. You'll lose excess water weight, hydrate your skin, and get other health benefits.

## Pyruvate

It seems we all Pyruvate present in our bodies, as it is formed during the digestion of carbohydrates and proteins. The claims for this natural remedy for losing weight are that it reduces fat, prevents the fat loss yo-yo effect, reduces cholesterol and increases endurance. All very beneficial things, if they actually come to pass.

And now down to business, does this work or doesn't it? Again, you would definitely need to do your own research as there seems to be at least three difference answers to that question - yes, no and maybe in some cases. Some say it works but only at high dosages (22 - 28 grams daily when the recommended dose is 500 micrograms to 1 gram). Some studies show that 23 per cent of the people who participated actually lost weight as opposed to some claims of a 48 per cent weight loss (roughly 2 to 3 pounds, not significant).

Now, on the other hand, another body of research says pyruvate does affect weight loss by burning fat and boosts energy. And this, good for high-end athletes and body builders, it kicks up the transport of glucose and protein into muscle cells and boosts exercise performance levels. Translation: helps them get toned and have more energy.

Once again, the jury is out on whether Pyruvate is truly effective or not. One thing you can take to the bank is that Pyruvate can be found in red apples, cheese and red wine. That's not to say go out and stuff yourself with any or all of these foods. But it does indicate that small amounts may be just fine, where larger amounts may be problematic. In the final analysis, more study is needed to determine if Pyruvate's claims of decreasing appetite and helping you lose weight are actually valid. What is certain, is this product is highly touted as a natural remedy for losing weight. The decision is up to you. Weigh all the options with care.

## **St. John's Wort**

While there are definitely any number of natural remedies for losing weight on the market, the question really becomes how effective are they and how safe are they. The answers to both of those questions would need to be researched carefully before you made any decisions. One thing to also remember, if you happen to be morbidly obese, many of these natural remedies for losing weight are likely not for you. As with any weight loss venture, you need to make sure you talk to your Doctor before you start any program.

One rather controversial herbal product that has a history of actually being used as an anti-depressant, seems to also be another contender in the weight loss arena. St. John's Wort, also called Hypericum, Klamath Weed, or Goat Weed, has been used for centuries to treat nerve pain, mental disorders, malaria, insect bites, wounds and burns. Amazingly, there are over 370 species of the genus Hypericum worldwide. It was also used by Native American as an anti-inflammatory, antiseptic and astringent.

In the twentieth century St. John's Wort (named for its traditional flowering and harvesting on St. John's day, June 24th) has more commonly been used to treat depression, anxiety, and/or sleep disorders. The part of the plant used to make preparations is the top of the little yellow flower and is usually used to makes teas and tablets.

How does St John's Wort help you lose weight? That's the funny part - it does and it doesn't. It seems the herbal remedy itself does not help you lose weight. However, how it makes you feel by improving how you feel about yourself, does cause you to lose weight. Being in a better frame of mind may cause people to eat less. Bottom line is any change in your eating habits after taking St. John's Wort will have more to do with any psychological improvements and not the herbal remedy.

Here's the most interesting thing though, there are natural remedies for losing weight on the market that feature St. John's Wort as the main active ingredient. The way it's presented implies St. John's Wort is the key proponent to your anticipated weight loss. It isn't, and this is a misrepresentation. So once again, do your research before you start taking any natural remedies for losing weight. Also, pay attention to any side-effects that may result from the herbal remedy you are considering.

## **Exiliss**

Research proved if you reduce your weight by just 10 per cent of your total weight you immediately benefit in a variety of ways. For instance, If you are overweight or obese, you increase your risk of heart disease, high cholesterol, stroke, hyper tension and Type 2 diabetes. Without carrying those extra life draining pounds, your body will thank you, and you will be a whole lot healthier for it too.

A relative new comer to the natural remedy for weight loss field is Exiliss. It boasts of all natural ingredients that work together to burn fat, or fight excess fat. The ingredients are Hoodia Gordonii (a powerful appetite suppressant), Chromium Picolinate (a metabolism booster), Selenium (antioxidant to control free radicals), Calcium Citrate (your body absorbs this better than Calcium Carbonate), and Soy Isoflavones (help lower cholesterol and heart disease risk).

There are more ingredients in this particular formula that also help you to lose weight - Kola Nut, Guarana, Grapefruit, Chinese Ginseng, Gymnema, Chickweed, Almond Nut, and Bladderwrack. Quite the collection of herbals, but what are they supposed to do for you? Kola Nut and Guarana are natural caffeine sources. Ginseng is an energy booster. Gymnema reduces sugar cravings, Chickweed, a mild appetite suppressant, Almond Nut, healthy monounsaturated fats to promote weight loss, and Bladderwrack, iodine rich for healthy thyroid function and metabolism.

Judging from the testimonials about this product, it does seem to work. However the real question is whether or not it is for you. This product is supposed to suppress your appetite, which will make you eat less. That's a start in the right direction of course, but even with a product like this, you will still have to make lifestyle changes and diet changes. Translation: no matter what you are doing, you will still need to eat less, exercise more and do something about the stressors that make you eat too much. Losing weight is not easy and you need to work at it. But, with the help of a natural weight loss product like Exiliss, you will lose those frustrating pounds and still get your required intake of vitamins, minerals and nutrients. Just do your product research before you opt in to buy any product for weight loss.

## **The Cross Training Support Program**

The Cross Training Support Program is rather unique in that it advocates that weight loss can be helped with Aromatherapy, Herbal Medicine, Acupuncture, Exercise, Nutrition and Lifestyle Changes, Crystals and/or Homeopathy. In other words, complementary therapies are the cross training. As with all plans to lose weight, you will still need to eat less and exercise more. Consume less sugar, simple carbohydrates and saturated fats. It's just as basic as that. No matter what other supplements or capsules you take, the bottom line is still you have to work to get it off. At the root of obesity is a physiological and psychological problem. It seems about 66% of adults in the USA are overweight or obese. It that isn't scary enough, about 25 million young people are either overweight or on the brink of becoming so. What does cross training suggest you do? They offer a 12 step program if you will that covers all the natural remedies for losing weight. The first is think of your weight loss as a lifestyle change, not a diet. Don't count calories (that's a radical one), just replace high fat content with low fat content. Eat low on the sugar index, to avoid highs and lows in your blood sugar that can lead to increased insulin production and conversion of calories to fat. Don't drink - it's fattening. Exercise, no way around it. Drink lots of water. Eat more frequently during the day. Take vitamins. Cut back on meat products. Reduce your portions. Believe in yourself and what you are doing. Sleep well. Overcome fears. The 12-step cross training program for losing weight isn't anything we haven't heard before. It doesn't offer lotions, potions or pills. It offers a plain old reasonable common sense natural remedy for losing weight. Are you up to the challenge?

## **The Brain/mind**

This might seem like an usual idea, losing weight using the brain/mind - but if you stop to think about it - it makes perfect sense. Where do all your thoughts come from? Your decision making abilities? Your fears, joys, etc? The brain/mind. It's far more powerful than many give it credit for and sadly underestimated as well.

Let's think about this idea a bit more - the brain as a natural remedy for losing weight. Not only is it immediately at your disposal, it is free. It's always available and can perform amazing feats when given the chance. You've heard and read about the power of positive thinking, about affirmations and meditation. They work, so why wouldn't being positive about your weight loss journey?

How difficult would it be to re-tool thinking patterns about food, diets, lifestyle changes and exercising? It might take quite a long time, but if the motivation is there, and the will and drive to succeed, it would make a winning combination. Granted there are exceptions to every rule, and there no doubt would be people who are genetically disposed to weight gain, those who have medical reasons they cannot lose weight, and still others who just don't want to lose weight for their own reasons.

In the final analysis, using your mind/brain connection in combination with a change in eating habits, increased exercise, smaller portions, and weight loss support groups certainly won't hurt you. In fact, it may teach you about a whole other side to how powerful your mind/brain can really be. It won't give you side effects either.

That is the key to the weight loss industry, it preys on our mind and our fears about being overweight. It sends subtle negative messages that tell you to rely on drugs for a solution you really have control over. The hundreds of weight loss remedies mostly suggest you cannot lose weight without this herb or that fat burner. A few will mention in small print that you should change your lifestyle in addition to using their products, but let's face it, how many people actually take the time to read the small print. With a little planning, a powerful urge to succeed in losing weight, a positive mind/brain approach to the changes you need to make and support and hard work - you WILL make it, there is no doubt about it.

## Yerba Mate

Yerba Mate (*Ilex paraguariensis*) belongs to the holly family and is prepared by steeping dry leaves and twigs in hot water (the infusion is called Mate). Only slightly less potent than coffee, it appears to be easier on the stomach. Yerba Mate has a strong vegetal, herbal, and grassy flavour much like some varieties of green tea. Over the past few years, extracts of Yerba Mate have shown up in natural remedies for losing weight. Why? Because it contains over 250 natural compounds such as caffeine, theophylline and theobromine. These compounds stimulate the central nervous system, and are diuretics, causing the body to shed water. Caffeine, theophylline and theobromine suppress appetite, and boost metabolism. The question is if Yerba Mate contains these ingredients and they are then combined with other variations of stimulants, diuretics, fat burners and goodness knows what else, what kind of side effects are potentially lurking in the wings? Yerba Mate proponents insist this is one of those wonder herbals that can actually achieve your weight loss and leaner physique goals without having to do too much about exercise or changing how you eat. They say Yerba mate suppresses appetite, increases caloric burn rate, and increases urination, thereby reducing overall body water weight. Note they say overall body WATER weight. While losing water does mean you weigh less, it doesn't address the primary problem of over eating, not eating properly and not exercising. At best, it would seem this product may be more of a quick fix than a real weight loss product. Always check with a doctor about your weight loss goals and how you are going to achieve them. If you plan on using an herbal product like this, then make sure your Doctor knows what other medications you are taking in addition. It is better to be safe, and to do your homework, rather than just plunge into something you aren't really sure about.

## **Glucomannan**

Everywhere you look you can find lots of advice on how to lose weight. Trouble is most people who want to lose it are in a hurry, despite it taking them a long time to actually put it on. It goes without saying that when battling weight problems it's a good idea to try and understand the possible behavioral, metabolic, hormonal or genetic factors underlying your weight problems.

With all the information floating around, in books, magazines, online, and in herbal remedy books that promote herbs for weight loss you'd think you'd be able to find something that actually does work. Overall, there is really only one successful weight loss program that works for the largest number of people - increase physical activity, cut calories and eat wholesome, nutritious foods.

If you want to still try a natural remedy for losing weight, you certainly can. You just need to be aware that these remedies work best if combined with changing your lifestyle. Whatever natural remedy you are considering, check it carefully for side effects and precisely how it accomplishes the weight loss it claims it can deliver.

If you are considering Glucomannan (derived from the root of of Amorphophallus Konjac) you'd want to know it's supposed to help you lose weight by delaying the absorption of glucose from the intestines. The working theory behind this product is that it binds with substances in the digestive tract to slow digestion and reduce the absorption of fat and carbohydrates. Since it absorbs a lot of water and swells in the stomach (forming a gelatinous mass), it gives you a feeling of fullness. Glucomannan is frequently used in supplements intended to promote weight loss.

Evidently Glucomannan research does show it lowers cholesterol (total and LDL). But of course, you would like it to help you lose weight. And that also seems to be something it can help you with. The Glucomannan (an actual fiber) can physically take up space in your stomach and turn off your brain's hunger signals. If you take this prior to a meal, you will be eating less. By mixing Glucomannan fiber with foods you've eaten, you're lowering the glycemic index of those foods, because the fiber slows the absorption of carbohydrates from those foods. Thus weight loss occurs, slowly but surely.

Be aware this product has been cited for causing esophageal obstruction and has been banned in several countries for this reason. Research Glucomannan before you try it, and get all the information you can before making a decision.

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