

ZONE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS BY BARRY SEARS PH.D.

1. Is there one Zone book that provides a good summary of Zone basics?

The first thirty five pages of Dr. Barry Sears' paperback, "A Week in the Zone," provides you with a great overview of "Zone Basics" and how quick and easy it is to make a Zone meal or snack using foods you already enjoy. You may also wish to look at Chapter 15, Scientific Validation of the Zone, which addresses some of the myths and misconceptions about the Zone Diet. In between, you will find recipes for a week in the Zone that are quick and easy to prepare. To speed meal preparation feel free to substitute frozen vegetables.

2. Why is protein and carbohydrate required at every meal and snack?

Zone logic says that the hormone insulin will make you fat and keep you fat. Your goal is to control insulin in a Zone, not too high not too low, throughout the day. The protein and carbohydrate content of a meal has a dramatic impact on insulin production and determines how well you control insulin in that Zone for the next 4-5 hours.

3. Why is meal timing so important?

Like a medication, you want to control the body's utilization of protein and carbohydrate consistently throughout the day, and you must eat a minimum of 3 meals and 2 snacks. A zone meal should provide you with 4-5 hours in the Zone, whereas a snack is good for approximately 2-2.5 hours. Additionally, you must eat within one hour after waking and don't forget your afternoon and late-night snack. You must eat every 4-5 hours whether you're hungry or not, no matter how busy you might be to stay in the Zone. In fact, lack of hunger without cravings for sugars and sweets coupled with good mental focus is a good indicator that you're in the Zone. Like planning your daily activities, meal and snack times must be planned accordingly. Based on your wake up time determine those time points throughout the day when it's time to eat your next meal or snack.

4. If I follow the Zone diet, does this mean I can never have rice, pasta or bagels again?

No, but you should be using these carbohydrate sources in moderation, like condiments. Simply make sure that most of your daily intake of carbohydrates comes

from vegetables and fruits and whenever possible cut down on your intake of grains and starches.

5. I thought complex carbohydrates (i.e. grains and starches) were good for you?

Grains and starches are "high-density" carbohydrates that are too easy to overeat, which will elevate insulin. As an example, 1 cup of cooked pasta has the same amount of carbohydrate as does 12 cups of broccoli. Low density carbohydrates in the form of fruits and vegetables are virtually impossible to overeat plus the fiber content, just like dietary fat, slows the entry rates of carbohydrates into the blood stream and helps control insulin levels. In addition, don't forget fruits and vegetables are loaded with vitamins and minerals unlike grains and starches. Remember, it's not that you'll never consume grains and starches again, but when you do, they must be consumed in moderation compared to fruits and vegetables.

6. Do I have to be obsessive about the Zone Diet to be successful?

No. Obviously, the greater the precision, the greater the results, but even if you only play by the rules of the Zone and use the eyeball method, you won't be too far away from the center of the Zone. Just remember to pay very close attention to your hunger and mental focus 4-5 hours after a meal. Using your eye, you will be able to adjust your hormonal carburetor with increasing precision without having to obsess about portion size, grams, or calculations.

7. Isn't the Zone Diet a high protein diet?

No, it's a protein-adequate diet. This is a key element of the Zone Diet -- no one recommends eating excessive amounts of protein, nor should you consume any less than your body requires. For most females, this is equivalent to 3 ounces of protein and for the typical male, this is equivalent to 4 ounces of protein at each meal. Both snacks should contain 1 ounce of protein. These amounts are hardly considered excessive. Remember, you must consume a minimum of 3 meals and 2 snacks per day.

8. I prefer to eat smaller, more frequent meals throughout the day. Is it possible to stay in the Zone?

Actually the greater the number of small meals you eat, the better the insulin control. This is called grazing.

9. Should I be concerned about such a seemingly low daily caloric intake?

For most females the minimum total calories consumed is 1,100 calories per day, and for most males, the calories consumed equals 1,400. While this would seem like a deprivation that leaves you constantly fatigued, the Zone Diet is designed to eliminate hunger between meals without the nagging cravings for sugars and sweets while maintaining peak physical and mental energy throughout the day. If you have excess body fat (greater than 15% for males and greater than 22% for females), then all the calories you need are already stored in your body. Remember that the typical male or female in this country carries about 100,000 calories of stored fat on them at all times. To put this in perspective, this represents approximately 1,700 pancakes, which is a pretty big breakfast. To access those 1,700 pancakes you simply need a "hormonal ATM card" to release these stored calories. The Zone is that card. If you are using your Zone ATM card correctly, you don't have to consume as many external calories to meet your body's energy requirements. More importantly, the fewer calories you consume the more you will slow the aging process. You aren't hungry, because the balance of protein to carbohydrate maintains stable blood sugar levels to the brain. Finally, on the Zone you are eating as if you are already at your ideal body fat percentage because you are using a combination of your stored body fat and incoming calories to meet your daily caloric requirements. Therefore, once you achieve your ideal weight, you don't change your diet at all.

10. Doesn't any low-calorie diet cause fat loss?

Not necessarily. Research studies in the 1950s conducted by Kekwick and Pawan at the Middlesex Hospital in London demonstrated this with several different diets consisting of 1,000 calories per day. All patients lost substantial weight on a high-protein (90% of calories) diet, high-fat (90% of calories) diet, and mixed (42% of calories as carbohydrate) diets, but most patients actually gained weight on a high-carbohydrate (90% of calories) diet. Cutting back on calories without gaining access to your Zone ATM card is a sure-fire prescription for feelings of deprivation, constant hunger, fatigue and finally failure. Any time you reduce calories, you will lose some weight, but eventually you hit a hormonal plateau where the weight loss (and more importantly fat loss) stops, but feelings of hunger, deprivation and fatigue continue. Unlike other reduced-calorie dietary programs, the Zone is a hormonal control program, which maintains adequate levels of blood sugar to the brain that allows for significant calorie reduction without hunger, fatigue, or deprivation. This life-long use of the Zone makes it the only "drug" that can successfully provide permanent fat loss and reversal of the aging process.

11. What is more important, the glycemic load you consume or the glycemic index of the carbohydrates you eat?

The glycemic load, which is the combination of the total intake of carbohydrates and their rate of entry, is most important. However, you see even far greater results on the Zone Diet by making sure most of your carbohydrates come from low-glycemic carbohydrates, thus making the overall glycemic load lower. Eating low-glycemic foods (such as vegetables and fruits) slows their rates of entry into the bloodstream, thereby maintaining the best possible insulin control. In addition, low-glycemic carbohydrates provide the maximum amounts of vitamins and minerals with the least amount of carbohydrate. Finally, when you eat low-glycemic carbohydrates, you will always sit down to a very hearty meal because low-glycemic carbohydrates are usually low-density carbohydrates. It is simply very difficult to over-consume low-density carbohydrates such as fruits and vegetables.

12. How long before I can expect to see results on the Zone Diet?

Within two to three days you should see a noticeable reduction in your carbohydrate cravings with increased mental focus. Within five days you will notice a significant decrease in hunger throughout the day coupled with greater physical performance and less fatigue as the day wears on. Keep in mind that this is a fat loss program and don't expect rapid weight loss. The maximum fat loss you can expect, no matter how strictly you follow the program or how much you exercise, is one to one and a half pounds of fat per week. It is simply impossible to reduce excess body fat any faster on any dietary program. Within two weeks, you will notice that your clothes are fitting much better. Although you will not experience dramatic weight loss, judge your success by the fit of your clothes and changes in body composition.

13. Why doesn't the Zone include the protein content of carbohydrate-rich sources like vegetables or grains?

Because everyone would get too bogged down in the calculations. A significant amount of the protein in these foods is not absorbed; therefore, one has to impose correction factors to take into account the actual amount of protein absorbed and its effect on hormonal response. Since vegetable sources are not very protein dense, it makes more sense to ignore their protein content. Vegetarians should make sure that they always include protein-rich vegetarian sources such as firm tofu, isolated protein powders, or soybean meat substitutes at every meal to ensure adequate protein intake throughout the day. Protein is protein, carbohydrates are carbohydrates, and seeds and nuts are fats.

14. What is the minimum amount of daily protein intake?

Regardless of your protein calculations, we always recommend a minimum of 75 grams of protein throughout the day for adults. This is ideal for most women, whereas most men will require about 100 grams of low-fat protein each day.

15. Won't the Zone cause osteoporosis and kidney failure?

The Zone is a protein-adequate diet in which small amounts of protein are portioned evenly throughout the day. No one should eat more protein than his or her body requires, but conversely no one should eat less because you will put yourself in a state of protein malnutrition. On the Zone, you are not only eating adequate protein, but also portioning it over three meals and two snacks. It's almost as if you are receiving an intravenous drip of protein throughout the day. Excessive protein at any meal can't be stored by the body, and therefore is converted to fat. The first step in this conversion process is the removal of the amino group from the protein, which can put a strain on the kidney if excessive protein is floating around in the bloodstream. The newest research actually indicates that women who eat more animal protein have fewer hip fractures than those who eat less than 75 grams per day. Furthermore, the additional research indicates that even for patients with kidney failure, earlier reports about protein restriction may have been overblown. Calcium loss, even when eating excessive amounts of protein, is completely blocked if adequate calcium is supplied with the protein. The one mineral many women don't get enough of is calcium. So if you are concerned, drink a glass of milk with each meal or take a calcium supplement.

16. Why don't the French have high rates of heart disease?

Nutritionists just hate the French. They smoke, they drink, they eat lots of fat, they don't exercise, they seem to have a very good time, and they have the lowest rates of heart disease in Europe. It's called the French Paradox. It's only a paradox if the results are contrary to your expectations. Obviously, there are a number of reasons for these surprising statistics, but I believe the major factor is that their meals are moderate in calories, rich in fruits and vegetables, always contain protein, and they include fat. That's a good definition of the Zone. We also have the so-called Spanish Paradox. In the last 20 years, Spaniards have eaten more protein, more fat, and fewer grains and their rates of cardiovascular disease are dropping. These are not paradoxes, simply adjustments in the hormonal responses to a change in diet.

17. The Chinese eat a lot of rice; don't they have low rates of heart disease?

No, according to the American Heart Association, the rates of cardiovascular disease in urban Chinese males are nearly as great as Americans, and Chinese females, both rural and urban, actually have greater rates of cardiovascular disease than American females. In addition, the data from the American Heart Association indicates that Chinese have greater overall mortality of adults than is found in Americans. This data demonstrates the danger of using epidemiological data to make far-reaching dietary assumptions.

18. I'm concerned about pesticides on fruits and vegetables, and the hormones and antibiotics used in beef and chicken production. What should I do?

These are valid concerns. You should always try to eat organic fruits, vegetables, and range-fed beef and chicken. However, be prepared to pay a significantly higher price and be willing to cope with their scarcity. Don't, however, make this an excuse for not eating the appropriate protein-to-carbohydrate balance at every meal.

19. I'm not overweight. Why would I need to follow the Zone?

The Zone is not a diet. It's a lifelong hormonal control program. Loss of excess body fat is only a pleasant and very desirable side effect. In addition, the Zone is the only dietary program that has been demonstrated to reverse the aging process. Although the Zone was originally developed for cardiovascular patients, it was extensively tested on world-class athletes. Between those two extremes lies everyone else. If you are at your ideal per cent body fat and want to think better, perform better, and live longer, then the Zone is for you.

20. When was the Zone developed?

The program has been undergoing constant testing and revision since 1984. The present program represents the eighth generation of my original concept to control hormonal responses using dietary intervention. My book, "The Zone," provides a more detailed history of this development process. The Zone has been used by millions of individuals during its first introduction in 1984. My newest book, "The OmegaRx Zone, is the next evolution of the Zone.

21. Can I continue taking my vitamins and minerals?

Vitamins and minerals are an excellent low-cost insurance policy to ensure adequate micronutrient (vitamins and minerals) intake. However, the Zone Diet -- which is primarily composed of low-fat protein, fruits and vegetables -- provides an excellent source of vitamins and minerals and requires much less supplementation. Nonetheless, I believe appropriate supplemental vitamin and mineral support can significantly enhance the Zone program.

22. What exactly do you mean by "use in moderation" when referring to unfavorable carbohydrates?

Try not to make unfavorable carbohydrate (grains, starches, breads, and pasta) more than 25% of the total carbohydrate grams in a meal. Use them as condiments, not your primary carbohydrate source.

23. Should I be concerned about sodium?

Not if you are following a Zone Diet because excess insulin activates another hormonal system that promotes sodium retention. However, it always makes sense not to use excessive amounts of sodium.

24. I'm a pure vegetarian. How can I make this diet work for me?

Simply add protein-rich vegetarian foods to your current diet to maintain the correct protein to carbohydrate ratio. Ideal choices are firm and extra firm tofu and isolated soybean protein powder. The new generation of soybean-based meat substitutes (hot dogs, hamburgers, sausages, etc.) is another excellent way of turning a carbohydrate-rich vegetarian diet into a vegetarian Zone Diet. Traditional vegetarian protein sources, such as beans, have an exceptionally high amount of carbohydrate for the amount of protein they provide, which makes it impossible to achieve the desired protein-to-carbohydrate balance to enter the Zone. Also, check out "The Soy Zone" by Dr. Barry Sears.

25. Which protein powders are best?

Excellent sources of isolated protein include egg and milk combinations and lactose-free whey powder. For vegetarians, isolated soy protein powders are excellent choices. Protein powders are available at most health food stores. Protein powders can be added to carbohydrate-rich meals, like oatmeal, to make them more hormonally favorable. They can also be added to flours and mixes (like pancake, muffin, and cookie) for cooking and baking to fortify the protein content.

26. What impact will various cooking methods have on the quality of macronutrients or micronutrients?

Cooking has little effect on macronutrients (except that excessive heat can damage and cross-link protein with carbohydrates). However, cooking can have a very negative effect on micronutrients (vitamins and minerals). Vitamins are extraordinarily sensitive to heat. In addition, minerals can be leached out of food when cooked with water. Therefore steaming vegetables is an ideal way to retain micronutrients and yet make the vegetables more digestible. Fruits are usually eaten raw, retaining all of their micronutrients. The more carbohydrates are processed or cooked, the more rapid their entry rate into the bloodstream. This is why "instant" forms of carbohydrate like instant rice or instant potatoes should be avoided.

27. Do I eat my meal or snack even if I'm not hungry?

Yes. This is the best time to eat in order to maintain hormonal equilibrium from one meal to the next. You're thinking calorically, not hormonally. To maintain insulin in a Zone, you must eat every 4-5 hours. Like an IV drip, you want to control the entry rates of protein and carbohydrate evenly throughout the day. That's why everyone must consume a minimum of 3 meals and 2 snacks each day.

28. Will this diet heal the damage done to my body over the years?

The body has a remarkable ability to repair itself given the appropriate tools. The best of those tools is the diet, especially one that orchestrates the desired hormonal responses that accelerate the repair process.

29. Why don't I count all the protein, carbohydrate, and fat in everything I eat?

You would need a mini-computer to make all the calculations. This is why we devised the "1-2-3" method that takes into account fat content, protein digestibility in low-fat protein, and the insulin-sensitive carbohydrate content of carbohydrates. This makes Zone meal preparation exceptionally simple.

30. Will a liquid meal in the correct ratio get me to the Zone? If not, why not?

A liquid meal has a much greater surface area than solid food. Therefore, the digestion and entry rate of macronutrients into the bloodstream cannot be controlled that well and there is a corresponding decrease in the desired hormonal control. Liquid meals are more convenient, but hormonally not as desirable as solid food. They can be used occasionally if you just don't have the time to cook and are much more desirable than skipping a meal or snack.

31. Can children use the Zone?

The diet is ideal for children because they need to be in the Zone even more than adults do. The average child before puberty will need about 15 grams of protein per meal with the appropriate amounts of fat and carbohydrate. After puberty, they should eat the same amounts as a typical adult. This is to ensure more than adequate protein for growth spurts. The one protein source that virtually every child will eat is string cheese.

Although a little high in saturated fat, string cheese is a good way to introduce more protein in your child's diet. That leaves just the hard part for parents: getting your kids to eat fruits and vegetables instead of pasta and bread.

32. How do I know that two years from now the Zone will not turn out to be like the other diets that initially produce great results?

First, the Zone is not a diet, but a life-long hormonal control program that allows you to maximize your full genetic potential. Second, the Zone has been in the popular press for more than eight years, and the newest research has confirmed everything I originally stated in *The Zone* in 1995. The hormonal systems the Zone is based upon have evolved over the last 40 million years and are unlikely to change soon. Surprisingly many diets are based on gluttony and extremism. Either they let you eat all the carbohydrate you want (high-carbohydrate, low-fat diets) or all the protein and fat you want (i.e. high protein, low-carbohydrate diets), and both diets don't worry about the quantities consumed. The Zone is based on balance (of protein and carbohydrate) and moderation (of calories) with limits on the amount of protein, carbohydrate, and fat consumed at every meal.

33. What if I make a mistake or go overboard?

Don't worry. You're only temporarily knocked out of the Zone. You can get on track with your next meal or snack. Zone living is guilt-free.

34. I'm currently taking medications. How will this affect the Zone diet?

Any change in diet (for better or worse) will affect the metabolism of the drug(s) you are taking. Always consult with a physician before starting the Zone Diet or any other dietary plan. In addition, many medications will actually raise insulin levels making it difficult to enjoy the desired benefits no matter how strictly you follow the program. See if your physician could possibly switch to a medication that does not negatively influence insulin levels. Never change the dosage or stop taking your medication without first consulting your physician.

35. I haven't exercised in years. Should I?

Since people are not fatigued or feel listless in the Zone, many are inclined to start an exercise program for the first time in years. While not as important as your diet, exercise does play an important role in helping you control insulin. The best form of exercise is any routine you will perform on a regular basis. If you haven't exercised for a long time, building up to a brisk 30-minute walk is a great way to get started again. As your

endurance builds, you may even wish to increase the intensity and even add some form of weight training as part of your regular workout schedule. Never think that increased exercise can erase the problems associated with poor diet. It's an 80/20 rule (i.e. 80% diet and 20% exercise) that will help maximize your time spent in the Zone. At best most can possibly exercise one hour per day, but what about the remaining 23 hours of the day?

36. I exercise on a regular basis at high intensity. How can I optimize my workout schedule to get the maximum hormonal bang for the buck?

Whether you are training with weights or training aerobically, thirty minutes prior to exercise eat a Zone snack. This will set the hormonal stage to trigger the preferential burning of stored body fat as soon as your workout begins. If you are training with weights, do not train for more than 45 minutes maximum and training should preferably take place in the morning. Have another Zone snack within 30 minutes after the training session ends and a Zone meal no more than 2 hours later. Most important of all, don't forget your bedtime snack.

37. I get confused when it comes to the difference between proteins and carbohydrates. Are there any simple rules to help me when I shop?

Animal Proteins move around (or at least once did) and carbohydrates come from the ground (plants and trees in the form of grains, i.e. pasta, breads and cereals, vegetables, and fruits). When shopping always try to stick to the periphery of the market. There you will find fresh fruits and vegetables, the deli case, the salad bar and the meat department. Down the middle aisles, you'll find all the packaged carbohydrates a sure-fire way to increase insulin levels and knock you out of the Zone.

38. What is alcohol? Is a glass of wine is ok?

The body treats alcohol as if it were a carbohydrate. For all intents, treat 4 oz. of wine, a bottle of beer, or 1 1/2 oz. of distilled liquor as if it were 10 grams of carbohydrate or one Zone Block of carbohydrate.

39. As long as my protein and carbohydrate balance at any meal or snack is based on Zone guideline, couldn't I eat all I want and still keep insulin under control?

Any excess calories at a meal, even if perfectly balanced, that can't be immediately used by the body will be stored as fat because of the increase in the overall insulin levels. The typical calorie size for the typical female is approximately 300 calories, and approximately 400 calories for the typical male.

40. Why do I need extra fat? What does it do?

Paradoxically it takes fat to burn fat, if the fat source is monounsaturated fat. Remember the Zone is not an excuse for fat gluttony, but the need to add back reasonable amounts of fat to each meal. First, fat doesn't affect insulin and thus acts as a control rod to slow carbohydrate entry into the bloodstream thereby reducing the insulin response. Second, it releases a hormone (cholecystokinin or CCK) from the stomach that tells the brain to stop eating. Third, it supplies the building blocks (i.e. essential fatty acids) for eicosanoids. Most of your fat intake should be in the form of monounsaturated fat, and the amount of fat you consume is dictated by the amount of protein you consume at each meal. If anything, be more liberal than restrictive with your fat intake.

41. Can I lose too much body fat?

Obviously, it's possible to lose too much body fat. So once you achieve a weight and look that you are happy with and wish to stabilize your body weight, simply add more monounsaturated fat to your diet. Since you were always eating as if you were at your ideal body fat percentage, the protein and carbohydrate content of your diet remains the same. You must add more fat, preferably mono fat, as caloric ballast to prevent any further fat loss. This extra monounsaturated fat provides the extra calories to maintain your body's percent body fat without affecting insulin levels. For many world-class athletes in the Zone, they consume 60% percent of their daily calories in the form of fat.

42. Why is the fat block only 1.5 grams?

Every block of low-fat protein contains approximately 1.5 grams of "hidden" fat. Therefore, by adding one extra fat block (which is defined as 1.5 grams of fat) for each block of low-fat protein, you are actually consuming 3 grams of fat or two fat blocks (one internally in the protein and one external) for each protein block. If you are using fat-free protein choices, such as isolated protein powders, then you should be adding 2 blocks of fat to achieve the same ratio. Obviously, if you are eating higher-fat protein choices, you would not be adding any extra fat blocks to your meal. Remember that every time you add additional fat blocks to a meal, they should be composed of primarily monounsaturated fat.

43. What are the best sources for long-chain Omega 3 fats?

The best sources are cold-water fatty fish such as salmon, mackerel and sardines. Other marine sources that have a lower Omega-3 fat content are common fish such as tuna, swordfish, scallops, shrimp, and lobster. Try to consume about 10 grams of long-chain Omega-3 fats per week. This would translate into two servings of salmon or four servings of tuna or similar fish per week. One teaspoon of refined fish oil contains about 1 gram of long-chain Omega 3 fats. Remember that your grandmother used to give you a tablespoon of cod liver oil per day. That was about 3 grams of long-chain Omega-3 fats per day or 20 grams per week.

44. I'm a vegetarian and can't use fish oil, what should I do?

There is a new generation of algae-based oils that are rich in long-chain Omega-3 fats. This allows the vegetarian to get adequate levels of these critical fats.

45. How do I adjust my hormonal carburetor?

Not everyone is genetically the same. Your hormonal carburetor is based on the protein-to-carbohydrate balance that generates the best hormonal response for you. That hormonal response is easily measured by asking yourself, "how do I feel" four to five hours after a meal. If you maintain excellent mental clarity and have no hunger, then the protein-to-carbohydrate balance in your last meal was ideal for your biochemistry. Your goal is to make every meal with that same ratio to generate the same hormonal response. For the vast majority of people, this balance is two grams of protein for every three grams of effective carbohydrate. So the most efficient way to fine-tune your own carburetor is to start with this ratio and then experiment slightly on either side to determine your limits by using hunger and mental clarity as the parameters you wish to optimize.

46. I'm still hungry on the Zone Diet, what should I do?

You need to make a slight adjustment to your hormonal carburetor. Learn to play food detective. If you feel hungry within two to three hours after your last meal and experience a drop-off in mental focus (due to low blood sugar), it is because you consumed too much carbohydrate relative to the amount of protein at your last meal. Simply make that same meal in the future and keep the protein constant, but reduce the carbohydrate amount by 10 grams. On the other hand, if you feel hungry before any four to six hour cycle ends, but maintain good mental focus, you're pushing insulin levels too low. The brain has a sensing system that picks up low insulin levels in the bloodstream and tells you to eat to increase insulin levels, even though the brain is getting plenty of blood sugar (hence the good mental focus). Simply make that same meal in the future and add 10 grams of carbohydrate to that meal. In essence, what you are doing is adjusting your personal hormonal carburetor to put yourself in the center of the Zone. In either case, you should also add more monounsaturated fat to either meal

because fat releases the hormone cholecystokinin (CCK) that promotes a feeling of fullness, which is known as satiety.

47. I thought fat was the enemy?

Fat, especially monounsaturated fats like olive oil, plays a critical role in controlling the entry rate of carbohydrates into your bloodstream. How well you control the entry rates of carbohydrates into the body determines how well you control insulin and consequently how your body performs for the next 4-5 hours.

48. I have developed some constipation. What should I do?

A Zone Diet will switch your body to a fat-burning metabolism instead of a carbohydrate-burning metabolism. The metabolism of fat requires greater amounts of water on a daily basis. Therefore, the first step is to increase your water intake by 50%. If this isn't sufficient to reduce the constipation, then you are probably releasing a particular type of stored fat known as arachidonic acid from your fat cells. For about 25% of the population, there will be a transitory release of arachidonic acid. The build-up of extra arachidonic acid is a result of your previous dietary patterns. This temporary increase in arachidonic acid in the bloodstream can give rise to constipation by reducing water flow into the colon. Adding extra long-chain Omega-3 fats to your diet will minimize this transitory effect. The best source of EPA is fish, but another good source is fish oil capsules as long as the fish oil has pharmaceutical grade. For the first week on the Zone, I recommend taking an additional 6 grams of fish oil per day. Alternatively, you can slow the release of stored body fat by making a slight adjustment in your hormonal carburetor and add 10 grams of carbohydrate block to each meal for the first week.

49. How should I alter this diet if I'm pregnant and/or nursing my child?

If you are pregnant or nursing, you should be using a Zone Diet to ensure adequate protein intake. For pregnant women, increase your protein intake by 10 grams at every meal with a corresponding increase of carbohydrate and fat. In essence, you are now consuming the meals that a typical male would eat. For nursing mothers, add an extra five grams of protein to each Zone meal.

50. Can I cut back on fat intake as long as I balance my protein and carbohydrate requirements?

You can, but ironically, you will not lose as much fat. The small amount of added fat acts as a control rod to reduce the entry rate of carbohydrates into the blood stream, thereby reducing insulin secretion. By reducing insulin, you can access your stored

body fat more effectively. Also, the fat causes the release of the hormone cholecystokinin (CCK) that promotes satiety between meals. Of course, any added fat to your diet should be primarily monounsaturated fat, such as olive oil, guacamole, almonds, or macadamia nuts.

51. I haven't lost any weight. What am I doing wrong?

Often your weight on the scale will not change even though you are losing body fat. This is because you are likely to be gaining new lean body mass. The result is that your weight is constant, but your body composition is changing. You can tell this from the fit of your clothes.

52. I've been doing great for the first three months and seem to have hit a plateau.

First try adjusting your hormonal carburetor by dropping 10 grams or one Zone Block of carbohydrate from each meal and add back some extra monounsaturated fat to maintain the same number of calories. If that is not sufficient, then reduce the total number of blocks in each meal by one block for a few days.

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