

Study: Brain triggers hunger during fasts

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A series of events in the human brain apparently stimulate hunger during periods of fasting, researchers at the Yale University School of Medicine said.

The study, published in the January issue of *Cell Metabolism*, found the events in the brain make sure a person stays hungry when food is scarce, HealthDay News said. Researchers said thyroid hormone in the brain is linked to increases in the protein UCP2, setting off a chain reaction that ultimately boosts the neurons that drive hunger.

The researchers studied mice on a 24-hour fast. Researchers found there was an increase in the enzyme that stimulates thyroid hormone production in concert with increased UCP2 protein activity.

The study examined the protein and its effects on the activity of neurons, lead researcher Sabrinia Diano said. "It's how neurons 'learn' that food is missing, and it keeps them ready to eat when food is introduced."

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