

Scientists develop 'exercise pill'

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A U.S. scientist has created an "exercise pill" that activates a gene that tells cells to burn fat, making mice resistant to high-fat diet weight gains.

Salk Institute scientist Ronald Evans and colleagues said by giving ordinary adult mice a synthetic designed to mimic fat, he has been able to chemically switch on PPAR-d, the master regulator gene that controls the ability of cells to burn fat. Even when the mice are not active, turning on the chemical switch activates the same fat-burning process that occurs during exercise.

The resulting shift in energy balance makes the mice resistant to weight gain even on a high fat diet.

Evans, who presented the study Monday in Washington during the Experimental Biology 2007 meeting, said his findings might lead to a new approach to the treatment and prevention of human metabolic syndrome.

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