

Researchers identify method to help reduce fat in the blood

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Over 60 per cent of Canadians are classified as overweight or obese. This epidemic is a concern for experts around the world. One of the major problems is high levels of lipids in the blood, which can lead to cardiovascular disease, fatty liver disease and Type 2 diabetes. But a University of Alberta researcher has taken a major step in protecting people against these diseases.

Richard Lehner and his research group found that decreasing the activity of an enzyme called triacylglycerol hydrolase, or TGH, in an [animal model](#) results in lowering the amount of fat in the blood and improves glucose metabolism. It also appears to keep fat from being deposited into organs that aren't meant to store fat, like the liver.

A lack of TGH also showed to protect the beta cells in the pancreas that produce [insulin](#) and this can potentially protect from the development of diabetes in obese patients.

The benefits don't end there. Animal models that lack the enzyme also showed to burn more fat and were more physically active compared to those who had the enzyme.

This discovery shows that TGH could eventually be used as a target for pharmaceuticals to combat metabolic complications associated with obesity.

Lehner's study is published in the March edition of *Cell Metabolism*.

Provided by University of Alberta

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