

A weak heart produces a poor appetite

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Heart-brain-stomach link of major importance for diabetes and heart failure discovered: as a recent study by the MedUni Vienna has demonstrated, the hormone BNP, generated by the heart, also has an appetite-inhibiting effect. This discovery may open up new therapeutic opportunities for people with chronic heart failure or diabetes.

The heart not only responds to hormones, but it also produces some of these messenger substances itself. In patients with heart failure (weak hearts), increased levels of the [hormone](#) BNP (B-type natriuretic peptide) are released. When produced in greater quantities, this hormone supports the heart's action: not only do the kidneys excrete more sodium and fluid, but the vessels also dilate. The clear relationship between chronic [heart failure](#) and loss of appetite and the dramatic loss of weight

was already known about, and determining the reason behind it would represent an important new discovery.

“Heart hormone” BNP has an appetite-suppressing effect

A team at the MedUni Vienna led by Martin Clodi from the Clinical Department of Endocrinology and Metabolic Diseases has now been able to answer this question. The hormone BNP is the culprit, since it has a direct [appetite](#)-suppressing effect. The mechanism behind it is also described by the study, which has just been published in the internationally leading magazine “*Diabetes*”.

Newly-discovered “heart-brain-stomach link” opens up new therapeutic possibilities

Until now, all that was known was that there was a bi-directional connection between the brain and the gastrointestinal tract. This “[brain-stomach](#) link” is also one of the key triggers for the chronic conditions of irritable bowel syndrome and dyspepsia. “The heart-brain-stomach link that has now been discovered apparently appears to exchange vital information with the brain and regulate key physical functions and, in [patients with heart failure](#), clearly makes it easier for the heart to work effectively by reducing the patient's weight. This will open up interesting perspectives for new treatment concepts in [chronic heart failure](#) and diabetes,” says Clodi.

More information: B-type natriuretic peptide modulates ghrelin, hunger and satiety in healthy men. Vila G, Grimm G, Resl M, Heinisch BB, Einwallner E, Esterbauer H, Dieplinger B, Mueller T, Luger A, Clodi M. *Diabetes*, June 14, 2012, [doi: 10.2337/db11-1466](https://doi.org/10.2337/db11-1466)

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