

The X factor in liver metabolism

December 21 2012

After you eat, your liver switches from producing glucose to storing it. At the same time, a cellular signaling pathway known as the unfolded protein response (UPR) is transiently activated, but it is not clear how this pathway contributes to the liver's metabolic switch.

In this issue of the [Journal of Clinical Investigation](#), researchers led by Phillip Scherer at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center report that activation of the UPR triggers the expression of Xbp1s, a protein that regulates genes needed for the metabolic switch. Scherer and colleagues found that they could induce changes in [liver metabolism](#) just by increasing expression of Xbps1.

These results suggest that Xbps1 could play a role in metabolic disease.

More information: The Xbp1s/GalE axis links ER stress to postprandial hepatic metabolism, *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, 2012.

Provided by Journal of Clinical Investigation

Citation: The X factor in liver metabolism (2012, December 21) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-12-factor-liver-metabolism.html>

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