

Appetite suppression pills: Good or bad?

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New products are released each year promising to help buyers suppress their appetite to lose weight, but these over-the-counter concoctions may not be as effective as more natural approaches.

A web search of ingredients getting attention recently, like Hoodia gordonii or green coffee bean extract, brings up countless products that cannot always be trusted, according to University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Department of [Nutrition Sciences](#) Professor and Chair Timothy Garvey, M.D.

"There are little or no rigorous data addressing the efficacy of these sorts of compounds," Garvey said. "People buying these products are likely to be wasting money."

Instead, Garvey added that patients with obesity complications should seek direction from their [health care providers](#).

"There are proven [lifestyle modification](#) programs and medications that can be helpful," Garvey added.

There are steps one can take to naturally lower appetite. UAB Wellness Director Lauren Whitt, Ph.D., recommended starting the day with protein.

"It has long been suggested that people eat breakfast to help with hunger throughout the day, but your breakfast must have protein," Whitt said. "Egg whites or low-fat yogurt are excellent sources of protein that will keep you feeling fuller longer because it takes the body more time to digest and absorb them."

Later in the day, before hunger strikes, Whitt said a portion of an unsaturated fat can do the trick.

"Oleic acid, which is found in unsaturated fats, helps quell hunger," Whitt said. "It may sound counterintuitive, but this is healthy fat, so snack on a couple tablespoons of peanut butter or an ounce of nuts."

Lastly, Whitt said to toss a certain citrus into the mix.

"Eating grapefruit between meals, or with a meal, helps lower the [insulin levels](#) in your body," Whitt explained. "Insulin regulates your blood sugar and fat metabolism, so keeping insulin levels in check helps you fight the urge to grab a quick, sugary snack."

Provided by University of Alabama at Birmingham

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