

Spinach extract decreases cravings, aids weight loss

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A spinach extract containing green leaf membranes called thylakoids decreases hedonic hunger with up to 95% - and increases weight loss with 43%. This has been shown in a recently published long-term human study at Lund University in Sweden.

Hedonic hunger is another term for the cravings many people experience for unhealthy foods such as sweets or fast food, a common cause of obesity and unhealthy eating habits. The study shows that taking thylakoids reinforces the body's production of satiety hormones and suppresses hedonic hunger, which leads to better appetite control, healthier eating habits and increased [weight loss](#).

"Our analyses show that having a drink containing thylakoids before breakfast reduces cravings and keeps you feeling more satisfied all day", says Charlotte Erlanson-Albertsson, Professor of Medicine and Physiological Chemistry at Lund University.

The study involved 38 overweight women and ran for three months. Every morning before breakfast the participants had a green drink. Half of the women were given 5 grams of spinach extract and the other half, the control group, were given a placebo. The participants did not know which group they belonged to – the only instructions they received were to eat a balanced diet including three meals a day and not to go on any other diet.

"In the study, the control group lost an average of 3.5 kg while the group

that was given thylakoids lost 5 kg. The thylakoid group also found that it was easier to stick to three meals a day – and they did not experience any cravings", said Charlotte Erlanson-Albertsson.

The key is the feeling of satiety and suppression of hedonic hunger, vs homeostatic [hunger](#) that deals with our basic energy needs. Modern processed food is broken down so quickly that the hormones in the intestines that send satiety signals to the brain and suppress cravings cannot keep up. The green leaf membranes slow down the digestion process, giving the intestinal hormones time to be released and communicate to the brain that we are satisfied.

"It is about making use of the time it takes to digest our food. There is nothing wrong with our digestive system, but it doesn't work well with the modern 'pre-chewed' food. The thylakoids extend digestion, producing a feeling of satiety. This means that we are able to stick to the diet we are meant for without snacks and unnecessary foods like sweets, crisps and such", says Charlotte Erlanson-Albertsson.

More information: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24993695

Provided by Lund University

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