

# Unlock Your Weight-Loss Power

## A new book reveals how to fight back against the chemicals in our food that are sabotaging your weight-loss plan.

By Sascha de Gersdorff, Women's Health

In the book *The New American Diet*, *Men's Health* editor-at-large Stephen Perrine and co-author Heather Hurlock blow the lid off the stealth diet crushers that scientists are just now understanding. They're called [obesogens](#), nasty chemicals that act as fat-building catalysts, regardless of how often you hit the gym. *WH* sat down with Perrine to find out where obesogens lurk and how you can outsmart them.

### What—and where—exactly are obesogens?

**SP:** They're natural or synthetic chemicals that disrupt the way your hormones operate. For example, leptin is the hormone that tells your body it's full; fructose, an obesogen, can interfere with leptin and trick you into thinking you're starving right after a big meal. Some obesogens mimic the hormone estrogen, high levels of which promote [fat storage](#). They're in plastics used in food packaging and other consumer goods. Many pesticides are obesogens, as are steroids and antibiotics fed to or injected into animals. Obesogens also occur naturally in soy.

Go power shopping: [Avoid these 20 worst foods in your supermarket.](#)

### But if we're healthy, what's there to worry about?

**SP:** Obesogens make it much easier to become obese and to develop diabetes. Plus, researchers believe that some obesogens are changing the way our genes behave, causing our bodies to create not only more fat cells, but also larger ones that are more effective at [storing fat](#). And some studies have indicated that the more obesogens a woman is exposed to during her pregnancy, the more likely her children are to be obese as adults.

### You say obesogens are in water. So we can put on weight while hydrating at the gym?

**SP:** Well, that water probably traveled through PVC piping and contains traces of pesticides. And hard-plastic water bottles can contain the [obesogen bisphenol A](#) (BPA), which can leach into water. You need fluid, so the thing to do is cut down your overall exposure.

### What about the soy you mentioned earlier? Isn't soy supposed to be good for you?

**SP:** Soy is great, but it does contain two natural hormones that act as obesogens. The big problem is we now have soy in everything. It's in many baked goods and even fried foods. Another offender? Fructose derived from corn. In my house, we don't allow anything that has [high-fructose corn syrup](#) 🚫. Cutting that one ingredient can change your body mass, because you're eliminating a massive amount of sugar from your diet. Go through your fridge and pantry; you'll be surprised by how much food contains soybean oil or highfructose corn syrup.

Healthy eating: [5 food habits you should break](#).

### **Will that leave us with anything to eat?**

**SP:** The key is to focus not on all the foods you shouldn't eat, but rather on the 12 New American Diet superfoods. Look for sustainable fish and grass-fed, naturally raised chicken, beef, and pork that haven't been injected with hormones or antibiotics. Buy organic eggs and dairy products. Get food that comes in boxes or bags instead of BPA-lined cans. In terms of produce, generally look for organic versions of fruits with edible skin like apples, peaches, or pears; those with a tough skin, like avocados, bananas, and kiwi, are fine in conventional form. When you cut out obesogens and add in these high-nutrition foods, you can lose weight while eating however much you want. People who did our program for six weeks lost an average of 15 pounds, just by making simple swaps.

Sweet tooth: [How our addiction to sugar is killing us](#).

### **Can you give us an ideal day on the New American Diet?**

**SP:** For breakfast, try a high-fiber cereal with low-fat organic milk, then have a snack of Greek yogurt with nuts. For lunch, lentil or bean soup is good; if you must have bread, make it whole grain. For dinner, eat organic chicken with a Caesar salad (use organic romaine). The bottom line is that everything is OK if you know its origin—even a cheesesteak. Just be sure the beef is grass-fed, the cheese is organic, and that the sandwich isn't made with refined white bread.

### **How do we know this isn't just another fad diet?**

**SP:** A lot of diet rules we follow today are based on science from the '50s and '60s! We've ignored the fact that we've changed what we feed our livestock and how we grow our produce. We're still telling people it's healthy to have a salad with light dressing, but conventionally raised lettuce is often loaded with obesogens. And look at that dressing label. Often, the first ingredient is water, followed by high-fructose corn syrup. The point of this plan is to teach you how to swerve around weight-loss roadblocks by eating in a healthy, modern way.

Provided by *Women's Health*