

## Contents

- 4 **Dr. Mehmet Oz and Dr. Michael Roizen**  
Tips for cancer survivors
- 5 **Cancer**  
Foods you shouldn't eat
- 6 **Diabetes**  
Lower blood sugar without drugs
- 7 **Natural Health**  
Probiotics: Right for you?
- 8 **Ask the Doctor**  
Rotator cuff injuries
- 9 **Anti-Aging**  
Warning about longevity products
- 10 **Wellness**  
Symptoms of hidden health problems
- 11 **Latest FDA Approvals**  
Cystic fibrosis, vessel inflammation, cancer
- 14 **Dr. Maxfield**  
Vitamins for better bones
- 15 **Heart Health**  
How to lower blood pressure naturally
- 16 **Breakthroughs**  
Magnet therapy targets Alzheimer's

# 8 Surprising Reasons You May Be Gaining Weight

By Lynn Allison

If you've been counting calories and carbs and still not losing weight, researchers say it could be any one of a number of surprising, hidden causes of obesity.

In fact, a recent study by the U.K.-based Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs reports that although we are consuming 14 percent fewer calories than we did in the 1970s, we're getting fatter. One in three Americans is clinically obese, while another third are overweight, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"It's fascinating that we are eating fewer calories and still have this epidemic of obesity," Dr. Carson Liu, a weight-loss expert and bariatric surgeon tells *Health Radar*.

So what's behind the nation's ever-expanding waistline? Experts say it's not just poor dietary choices and lack of exercise. Stress, sleep deprivation, unhealthy lifestyles, and even environmental factors are to blame in many cases.

"We need to take a look at our environment and some of the habits we've developed to take control

of our weight and enjoy healthier lifestyles," Liu says.

Here are eight surprising reasons you may be gaining weight — and what you can do about them.

## 1. Environmental Pollution

Yes, you can blame the environment for sabotaging your diet and making you pack on the pounds. Pesticides, industrial chemicals, hormones fed to livestock, and other contaminants can all have an impact on metabolism and drive weight gain.

"This largely goes unnoticed," says Dr. Ellen Kamhi, Ph.D., author of "The Natural Nurse."

"Synthetic toxic chemicals sprayed on our food as pesticides are often endocrine disruptors. These toxins are highly fat soluble. After being exposed to these toxins, your body may increase fat stores to protect other body tissues."

She adds that inflammatory molecules increase in number with the presence of toxic chemicals — and increased inflammation leads to weight gain.

Synthetic chemicals used as growth hormones to fatten livestock

and the use of genetically modified organisms (GMO), which allow greater use of agrochemicals, may also be contributing to our inability to lose weight, she says.

Dr. Sharad Paul, author of “The Genetics of Health,” notes researchers at Ohio State University funneled air into mice cages and found that those exposed to polluted air — similar to city air — developed greater volumes of fat than the mice that breathed clean air.

“When fat cells were examined under a microscope, they were 20 percent larger in the mice inhaling pollutants,” he tells *Health Radar*.

**What you can do.** Buy certified organic foods whenever possible, and avoid using bug sprays or toxic chemicals in your home. Investigate the use of natural alternatives. Read all labels on cosmetics, shampoos, and other household items and choose those that contain natural ingredients. Drink the purest and cleanest water you can find. Spend time in nature as much as possible and lobby for more walking zones where cars are not allowed.

## 2. Medication

Almost half the American population takes at least one prescription medicine, and a side effect of many drugs is significant weight gain.

“Antidepressants are well-known to cause weight gain,” Dr. Aaron Tabor, a noted weight-loss expert and founder of the Healthy Directions anti-aging website tells *Health Radar*. “It may also be a combination of the antidepressants decreasing metabolism and physical activity, both leading to weight gain.”

Antihistamines are another popular class of drugs that targets a receptor that’s involved with both allergies and appetite. So suppressing that receptor’s activity can make you hungrier and overeat. Beta blockers, diabetes medications, corticosteroids, and antipsychotic drugs may also be culprits.

**What you can do.** Speak with your healthcare professional about the medications you take and whether they could be driving your weight up. “Don’t quit your medications before you talk to

your doctor, but ask for possible options that won’t have the same side effects,” says Tabor.

## 3. Sleep Deprivation

It may not be a coincidence that roughly one in three Americans gets less than six hours of shut-eye a night and about the same number are obese. In a recent study of older adults, getting only five hours of sleep instead of the recommended seven to eight tripled obesity risks in men and doubled them in women.

“The more sleep deprived you are, the more you increase the hormone cortisol, which increases your appetite,” says Tabor.

**What you can do.** Establish a healthy sleep routine and aim for seven to eight hours nightly. Set a schedule in which you go to bed and get up at the same time every day, including weekends. This helps regulate the sleep-wake cycles and other body rhythms, including your appetite.

## 4. Stress

When we’re stressed, our bodies release hormones into the



To renew or subscribe to Health Radar go to:  
[NewsmaxHealth.com/Newsletters](http://NewsmaxHealth.com/Newsletters) or call 1-800-485-4350

**Health Radar**® is a monthly publication of Newsmax Media, Inc., and Newsmax.com. It is published at a charge of \$39.95 per year, and is offered online and in print through Newsmax.com and NewsmaxHealth.com.

The owner, publisher, and editor are not responsible for errors and omissions. Rights of reproduction and distribution of this newsletter are reserved.

Any unauthorized reproduction or distribution of information contained herein, including storage in retrieval systems or posting on the Internet, is expressly forbidden without the consent of Newsmax Media, Inc.

For rights and permissions contact Newsmax Media, Inc. at PO Box 20989, West Palm Beach, Florida 33416 or [copyright@newsmax.com](mailto:copyright@newsmax.com).

### Editor

Nick Tate

### Art/Production Director

Phil Aron

For Subscription/Customer Service inquiries, call 1-800-485-4350 or e-mail [healthradar@newsmax.com](mailto:healthradar@newsmax.com). Send email address changes to [healthradar@newsmax.com](mailto:healthradar@newsmax.com)

© 2017 Newsmax Media, Inc. All rights reserved. Newsmax and Health Radar are registered trademarks of Newsmax Media, Inc.

**newsmax** health • **newsmax**

**Please note:** All information presented in **Health Radar** (including answers to reader questions) is for informational purposes only, and is not specifically applicable to any individual’s medical problem(s), concerns, and/or needs. **No content is intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.** All information presented in **Health Radar** should not be construed as medical consultation or instruction. You should take no action solely on the basis of this publication’s contents. Readers are advised to consult a health professional about any issue regarding their health and well-being. **Any action you take on the basis of the information provided is solely at your own risk and expense.** The opinions expressed in **Health Radar** do not necessarily reflect those of Newsmax Media, Inc.

bloodstream that wreak havoc with our metabolism and blood sugar levels, contributing to weight gain, as many studies have shown.

In February, a team of researchers reported in the journal *Obesity* that the more stressed people are, the more heavily and persistently overweight they are likely to be.

But stress has other biological impacts beyond driving hormonal changes, notes weight-loss expert Dr. Joel Fuhrman.

“One critical aspect of stress is the buildup of free radicals and other damaging toxins from overeating — eating too much and too often,” he tells *Health Radar*. “Emotional stress interferes with the body’s self-repair mechanisms that are enhanced when our bodies are resting, at peace, and sleeping. Stress can lead to chronic inflammation, which also causes weight gain.”

**What you can do.** Eat a more nutritious diet to help detoxify the body and cope with stress. Manage your stress by taking time to eat slowly and without distraction. Practice deep breathing and take breaks when needed from the stressors of your life. Yoga, meditation, and exercise are some tools you can use to reduce stress.

## 5. Too Much Salty Food

Excess salt can contribute to weight gain in a number of ways. Recent research has shown that a high-sodium diet may affect the activity of fat cells, making them larger.

“You tend to retain fluid when you eat a salty diet,” Amy Shapiro, founder of Real Nutrition NYC, tells *Health Radar*. “Even a sushi dinner can cause weight gain if you overdo the soy sauce.”

But the real culprit is that most foods that are high in salt — like chips, pretzels, fast food, and french fries — are also highly processed and are high in fat and sugar. High-sodium diets can also cause other problems besides obesity, like high blood pressure and ultimately cardiovascular disease, notes Shapiro.

**What you can do.** Avoid processed foods and eat a healthy diet of fresh fruits and veggies along with whole grains, lean meat, and fish. Try a no-salt seasoning product like Mrs. Dash to flavor your food.

## 6. High Thermostat

Keeping your house too cozy may sabotage your weight-loss efforts. When temperatures dip, the white fat in our cells turns to brown fat, which burns more calories, say researchers at the University of Kentucky, Lexington.

“Keeping temps too warm prevents our bodies from burning calories,” notes Shapiro. “These days we go from warm cars to warm offices so our bodies don’t really have to work to adjust to temperature changes. Therefore, we burn fewer calories.”

**What you can do.** By lowering your thermostat, you can boost your body’s metabolic activity. Experts recommend 68 degrees for maximum effect.

## 7. Excessive Alcohol

It’s not just the empty calories in alcoholic drinks that contribute to weight gain. Research shows that alcohol reduces the amount of fat your body burns for energy.

“Alcohol has no nutritional value and contains 7 calories per

gram,” says Shapiro. “So a 5-ounce glass of wine is 115 calories.”

Alcohol can also cause us to give up a bit of our self-control, so we may take in even more calories at a meal because we are less conscientious about what and how much we are eating.

“Even the mixers used to make fancy cocktails are high in sugar and make an innocent drink turn into a serious dessert,” Shapiro notes.

**What you can do.** Limit your alcohol consumption and drink it “clean,” without high-calorie mixers, Shapiro advises. If you do want to add a mix with the liquor, choose club soda with fresh lime or lemon.

## 8. Hidden Viral Infections

A certain strain of cold virus called adenovirus 36 could be a hidden factor in many cases of obesity.

Researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, discovered that 30 percent of obese people have been infected by this virus, but only 11 percent of thin people have it.

Dr. Richard Atkinson, emeritus professor at the university, speculates that catching the virus can boost weight gain by 12 percent to 15 percent. It appears to flood cells with glucose while turning on an enzyme that converts sugar to fat.

**What you can do.** Avoid catching the virus the same way you protect yourself against any other virus — by washing your hands frequently, not touching your nose or face when coming into contact with a sick person, boosting your immune system with a healthy diet, and getting enough rest. □