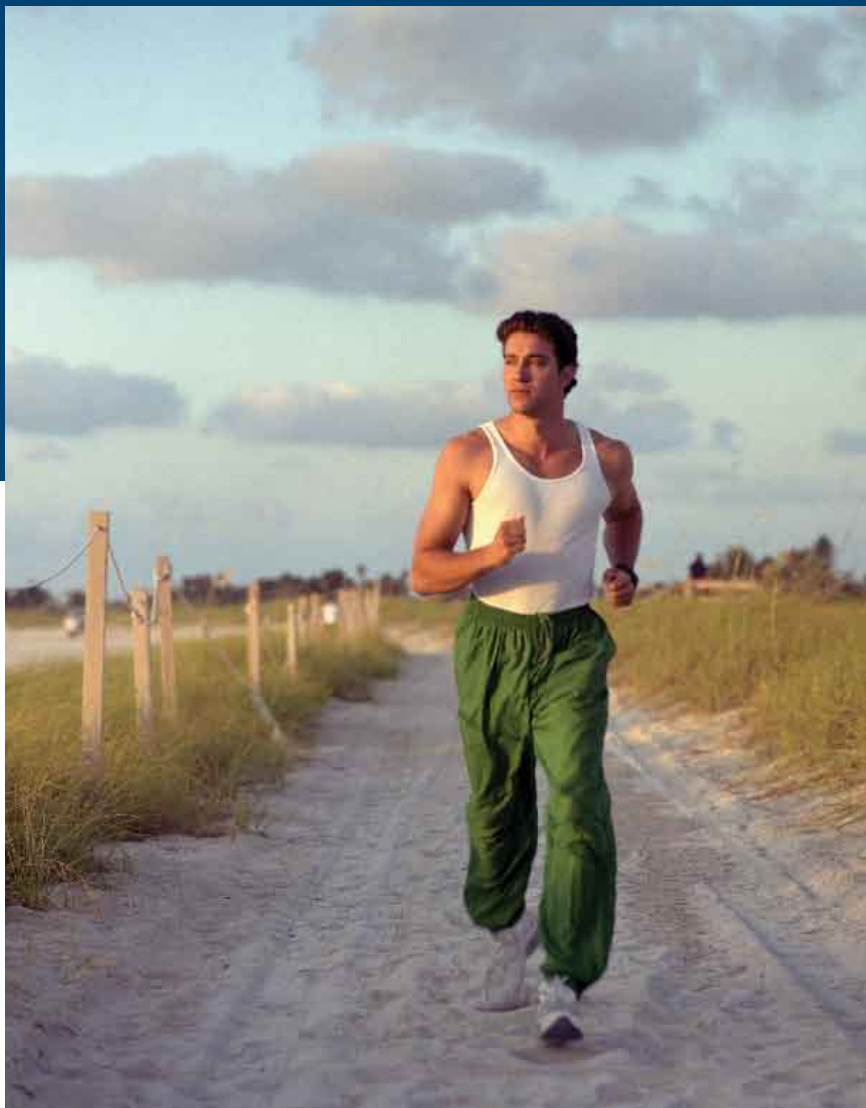


THE ZONE

“THE HORMONAL THEORY”

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- part 2 -



GLUCAGON

Glucagon releases glucose from the liver. What stimulates the release of insulin is the blood sugar, and what stimulates the release of glucagon (also from the pancreas) are proteins. 25% of the population does not suffer from this reaction of hyperinsulinism when eating carbohydrates and do not put on weight. This is a genetic factor (see the interesting opinion of Peter J. Adamo in his theory about blood groups and eating habits)

EICOSANOIDS

These are the superhormones that control the production of other hormones and form "the molecular cement that holds the human body together".

They also control our vital physiological systems: the cardiovascular system, the immune system, the central nervous system, the reproduction system, etc..

Amongst these are: prostaglandins, prostacyclins and thromboxanes (related to heart disease), leukotrienes (constriction of the lungs and allergies), lipoxins and fatty acid hydroxylase (controls inflammatory reactions and regulated the immune system). They could be considered as the "ultimate regulators of cellular function"

GOOD & BAD EICOSANOIDS

Eicosanoids are controlled by the fat in our diet that is converted into essential fatty acids, which, controlled by insulin, will produce bad eicosanoids, and controlled by glucagon, will produce good eicosanoids.

*Good eicosanoids act :

- to inhibit platelet aggregation as vasodilator
- to control cellular proliferation
- to stimulate the immune system as anti-inflammatory
- to reduce the transmission of pain.

*Bad eicosanoids have the opposite action:

- According to Sears, "the well-being of the body is achieved once it starts producing more good eicosanoids than bad ones".

But Sears goes further than a basic definition of well-being or health, as I mentioned above when talking about the great French professor, Claude Bernard, who said: "Health is the silence of the organs"; although it might sound poetic, this rule is very primitive. Nowadays we know that silent organs could be developing lethal tumours in silence up until just a few months before inevitable death. We are searching for optimum health, greatest efficiency of our body and mind, with the prevention of illness and aging. He also says that with the Zone, we can prevent, or at least reduce, the impact of genetic diseases. Sears, therefore, looking at health from a molecular point of view, arrives at the theories of traditional Chinese energetic medicine, that thousands of years ago called "constitution" what nowadays we could call the genetic makeup with which we are born, and called "condition", what nowadays we could call acquired behaviour, qualities and characteristics.



In other words, the Chinese doctors said that our constitution could be balanced by a healthy way of life, and in this way we could improve our condition. The opposite says that a bad condition could even be passed on to our descendents in the form of an unhealthy constitution.

The molecular definition of the Zone is therefore: "a favourable dynamic balance between good and bad eicosanoids."

HOW TO ENTER & REMAIN "IN THE ZONE"?

By respecting a strict distribution of carbohydrates, fats and proteins at all times and in each meal, which would be in the following proportion: 40% carbohydrates, 30% fats, 30% proteins. Sears claims that food and exercise are "hormonal modulators", and that "the main energy source for the muscles is fat and not carbohydrates, and this is achieved through intensive aerobic exercise".

WHY IS IT GOOD TO BE "IN THE ZONE"

I believe, like Barry Sears, also that we should "use food as if it were medicine". We should control what we eat, and eat in appropriate proportions, as if it were through an intravenous drip."

The Zone is a diet based on the advanced science of the proportions between foods. It has short term success with some people and it has been proven to be effective in the short term with athletes. Eight gold medals for American swimmers during the Olympic Games of Barcelona are a clear example.

WHAT DOES THE ZONE DIET PROMISE?

- The Zone allows you to lose weight, with " a loss of body fat".
- The Zone allows you to live with "increased energy, vitality and performance, both in work and at play and in personal relationships.."
- The Zone acts upon arthritis, cardiovascular and mental diseases, the premenstrual syndrome, chronic fatigue, even on infections produced by HIV.... could be the best defence against cancer".

WHY IS IT NOT RECOMMENDED FOR EVERYONE?

Many of the recipes proposes contain dairy products, and many people are allergic to these.

It is not natural, it is not healthy in the long term for everyone, it can only be used with a large amount of dietary supplements. And what would happen if tomorrow the supply runs out?

Dr Barry Sears has done some very serious research, and with a good motive: to live longer than his father did. But when he comes to using his diet, he proposes a list of industrially manufactured products.

Much of the success of the Zone Diet is due to marketing in the US. as its creator, Dr. Barry Sears, has made and marketed his own products. These are energy bars containing chocolate, cereals, dairy products and many chemical components such as artificial flavourings, instant soup that is taken with milk, soy proteins or powdered milk, omega 3 oil in liquid form or in capsules.

The Zone might be suitable for athletes and maybe many others, but it cannot be healthy in the long term because, as Dr. Barry Sears himself says "I have worked out and created this diet", it is a hormone diet, for energy and wellbeing. It would have to be a completely natural diet for the effect to be guaranteed in the long term, for a life-time. As with the Atkins diet, the Zone has an original version and a version that is "adapted" to the Mediterranean diet. How can we have faith in a diet that is linked to a large business enterprise. Barry Sears himself says "The Zone is identified exclusively with the brand Enerzona throughout Europe".

In the second version, or the version adapted for Spain, it would be interesting to study the menu that is proposed for a Spanish woman : she is to have 250 ml of milk, 90 gr of cheese (not very convenient for most people), she has to mix dairy products and fruit or proteins and fruit, which will cause indigestion (see the chapter on natural diet), but above all, she is recommended to add 2.5 gr of Omega-3 RX sold by Barry Sears (no other brand), to have an Enerzona snack bar mid-morning, she can substitute lunch by an Enerzona "instant Meal" milkshake made with a further 250 ml of milk (making 500 ml together with the 250 ml at breakfast).

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that The Zone is a successful diet, but it cannot under any circumstance be recommended for everyone, nor can it be advised as a life-time diet. The fact that athletes from the University of Stanford won eight gold medals during the Olympic Games of Barcelona is not scientific evidence. Athletes from other countries also won gold medals without having followed the Zone Diet. And if the Zone Diet had been the determining factor for the success of the Stanford athletes, why has it not continued to be used in subsequent Olympic Games? Why have the same number of medals not been won?

