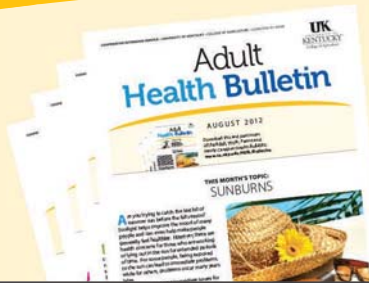


# Adult Health Bulletin

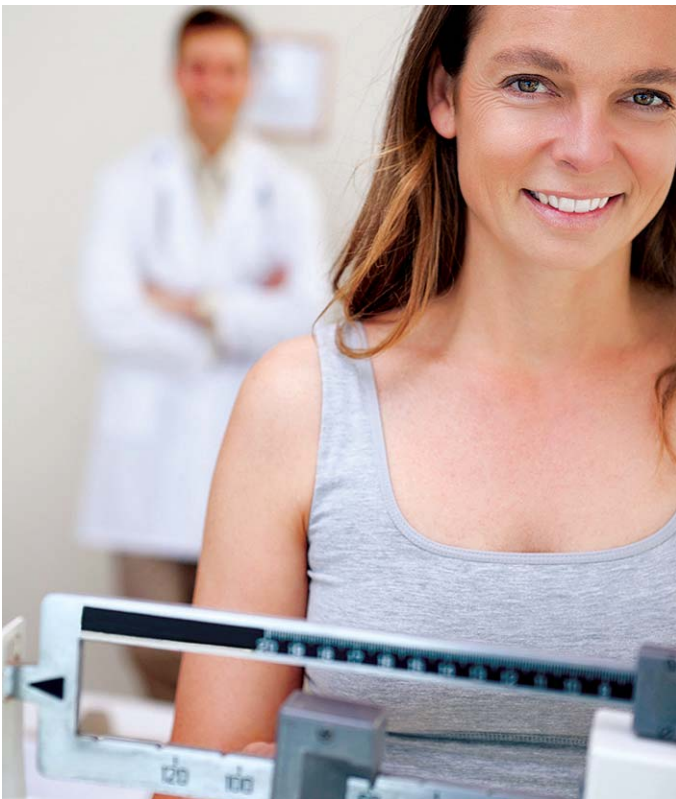


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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: METABOLISM



**H**ave you ever wondered about your metabolism? Perhaps you have thought of looking into a way to speed up your metabolism to burn more calories, faster? Or instead have you wondered if your metabolism has slowed down as you have aged? One thing is for sure: metabolism is very important for good health. Understanding what metabolism is and how we are affected by it is important.

### What is metabolism?

Metabolism is the process where the food you have eaten is changed into fuel that your body can use. This includes how and how fast the food is changed. Many people think of metabolism as how fast your body gains weight or loses weight. As a person gets older, metabolism tends to slow down. In fact, as early as your twenties, your body's ability to change the food you eat into energy and the speed at which it is able to do so slows down.

Continued on the back 

# *It is suggested that strength training is the best type of exercise for increasing metabolism.*

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The body is in need of constant fuel for all of the activities it has to keep in motion every day. Think about all of the different things that your body does that you do not even have to think about — breathing, movement of blood around the body, digestion, muscle movement throughout the body including the heartbeat and more.

## **Metabolism or metabolic rate**

Metabolism and metabolic rate are sometimes confused. Metabolism is how and how fast your body is able to change the food that you have eaten into fuel. The metabolic rate is the rate that you burn calories. Technically, the metabolic rate is the number of calories that you burn while your body is at rest.

There are many reasons that a person has a certain metabolic rate. Genetics play a big role — this is why some people remain the same size no matter how much they eat, while other people may have a tougher time losing a few pounds.

People who have more muscle in their bodies and less fat typically have a higher metabolic rate. The reverse is also true. Those with more fat and less muscle typically have a slower metabolism. This may be one reason why men generally have a higher metabolic rate than women. Men tend to have more muscle than women.

Although genetics play a role, they are not the only reason a person gains or loses weight. Lifestyle choices contribute greatly to metabolism, especially what is eaten and the level of activity. It is suggested that strength training is the best type of exercise for increasing metabolism, although doctors still do not know the reasons behind it. As for diet, it

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is important that a person does not go too long between meals. In fact, if a person eats only 1,200 calories or less per day, metabolism could actually slow down.

Of course, even if you are highly active, eat right and have terrific genes, the slowing down of metabolism as one ages cannot be stopped.

Metabolism is an important factor determining how and how fast the food we eat is used. If you would like to know more about your metabolism, make sure to talk to your healthcare provider.

### **SOURCE:**

Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise, May 2005.

Adult  
**Health Bulletin**

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