Scientists turn bad fat into ‘good’ calorie-burning fat

Scientists have found a way to turn bad fat into calorie-burning good fat, and say the discovery could lead to new and better treatments for obesity.

White or ‘bad’ fat typically collects around our waists as well as other parts of the body and stores the extra calories we consume.

But brown ‘good’ fat, found in abundance in babies, acts like a power source, burning calories and generating heat. By the time we are adults, most brown fat has disappeared and been replaced by white fat.

Scientists at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore initially tried to reduce body fat and weight gain in rats by suppressing the production of an appetite-stimulating protein called neuropeptide Y (NPY) in the part of the brain which helps to regulate hunger and thirst.

The findings showed that rats treated this way gained less weight after five weeks, compared with untreated rats which became obese, showing that suppressing NPY led to less calories being consumed.

However, when the scientists examined the rats with suppressed NPY, they discovered that some of their white fat had been replaced with brown fat.

The scientists speculated that white fat tissue may contain some brown fat cells which become activated when NPY is suppressed.

In the future, it may be possible to transplant or inject brown fat stem cells under the skin to burn white fat and stimulate weight loss, the researchers said.

Dr Sheng Bi, at the university’s school of medicine, who led the research said: “If we could get the human body to turn ‘bad fat’ into ‘good fat’ that burns calories instead of storing them, we could add a serious new tool to tackle the obesity epidemic.”

The findings are published in the journal Cell Metabolism.
When most people leave the dentist’s office, they’re leaving with chapped, stretched lips and a bit of Novocain numbness. But one Oregon woman left her dentist’s with an entirely new accent.

That’s what happened to Karen Butler after she was put under and had several teeth removed. “I just went to sleep and I woke up and my mouth was all sore and swollen, and I talked funny. And the dentist said, you’ll talk normal when the swelling goes down.” But she never went back to normal, and now has an accent that’s “a combination of British, Irish and Eastern European.”

Butler said her new accent immediately started getting attention. “You talk to young girls they think it’s a very, very pretty sound. And they say, I want an accent like that.” said Butler. “Oh, well just go see my dentist. He only charges $7,000.”

Butler is one of a very small number of people suffering from what is known as foreign accent syndrome. There have been just 60 recorded cases since 1941. There isn’t anything Butler can do to get her old accent back – she doesn’t notice the change at all. The only way she can hear the mix of Irish brogue and Eastern European thickness is by listening to a recording.

Apart from a few surprised people at the end of a telephone call, Butler said her life is mostly the same. Her husband agrees.

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3. Bananas for a calm brain
Rich in magnesium, which is essential in the transmission of nervous impulses, bananas are equally a source of Vitamin B6 (just one banana holds practically a quarter of the recommended daily amount).

4. Liver (veal, beef, chicken…) for intelligence
The brain accounts for around 20% of the body’s oxygen needs, and iron is needed to get oxygen to the brain by means of the blood’s haemoglobin.

5. Red berries for happy brain cells
All edible berries (blackcurrants, strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, blackberries etc.) are veritable mines of Vitamin C.

6. Shellfish for brain function
Though rich in Vitamin B12 and in, it is mostly the oligo-elements in seafood and crustaceans (oysters, clams, shrimp etc.) that are good for brain function to fight and prevent stress and its inconveniences.

7. Eggs for brain connectivity
Eggs contain lecithin and phospholipids, their value lies mainly in the quality of their proteins.

8. Spinach for good memory
All leafy vegetables share a richness in Vitamin B9 (or folates), which is known to play an active role in the development of a feto’s nervous tissue and also in the renewal of blood cells.

9. Cocoa for brain stimulation
In Aztec times, cocoa was already considered a medicine. Later, Casanova, the legendary seducer of women, used chocolate as an aphrodisiac with the kind of effects we know well!

10. Avocado to keep the brain young
The avocado is exceptionally rich in Vitamin E. This vitamin constitutes one of the most powerful antioxidants and protects the fatty tissues of the brain from aging. If you don’t like avocado, consider oleaginous fruit instead (nuts, particularly hazelnuts etc.).