

Life Extension Magazine August 2010

REPORT

Curb Compulsive Eating Naturally

Novel Spice Extract Targets the Neurochemistry of Appetite

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Do you find yourself routinely eating more than you mean to? Struggle with weight gain because you can't exercise "portion control?" Feel bad about it—but can't stop yourself from snacking?

In other words, have you ever gotten the feeling that food is *addictive*?

According to the latest scientific findings, *you're right*—and a novel natural intervention may now help you bring those urges under control.

In a historic study published earlier this year,^{1,2} a team of researchers demonstrated for the first time that the underlying biomolecular mechanisms driving millions to overeat are *identical* to those that lock people into the death spiral of cocaine and heroin addiction.

This landmark discovery confirms what many clinicians have long suspected: compulsive eating is as much a matter of brain chemistry as behavior.

Of course, no *drug* exists that can regulate appetite and induce weight loss without significant health risks.³ Some have proven disastrous. It was only after the lethal FDA-approved "**fen-phen**" drugs were shown to cause **pulmonary hypertension** and heart **valve disease**⁴—that the agency was forced to withdraw it.

The exciting news is a *natural* appetite regulator has been identified that operates at the neurochemical level to help provoke "satiety"—the feeling of being full. This unique extract is derived from **saffron**, prized for centuries not only as a spice but also as a mood enhancer in traditional cultures.^{5,6}

Here you will learn of **saffron's** capacity to boost serotonin, a neurotransmitter whose role in appetite and satiety is well established.^{3,7,8} You will discover how a team of French researchers uncovered the ability of saffron to dramatically decrease feelings of hunger between meals. You will also find out how just **88.25 mg** twice daily of a standardized saffron extract may help you effectively modulate some of the underlying psychological factors that make you eat more than you want to, with no side effects.



SEROTONIN'S ROLE IN "EMOTIONAL" EATING

Although its precise neurochemical mechanisms of action were confirmed only this year, the fundamentally *psychiatric* nature of what some experts call emotional eating has received clinical validation in an abundance of studies.⁹⁻¹² When severe enough, it reaches the level of a *compulsion*—a clinically diagnosable anxiety-related disorder. Compulsive eating occurs in about 30% of obese women,¹³ although its prevalence in the general population greatly exceeds that number. It is strongly correlated with poor impulse control, depression,¹⁴ and relapse following weight loss.¹⁵ In keeping with anecdotal observation, research shows its victims tend to gravitate toward sweet, non-nutritious foods¹⁶ like candy and ice cream.

In one of the most compelling findings on emotional eating to date, Dutch researchers reported this year that compulsive eating can result from a common *gene variant* for the molecule that transports **serotonin**, one of the body's primary **mood regulators**.¹⁷ People carrying this gene suffer from lower serotonin activity, predisposing them to depression and anxiety, especially under stress.¹⁸⁻²⁰ The Dutch study revealed that teens carrying this gene indulge in emotional eating at a significantly higher rate.



Antidepressants may offer some relief from emotional eating. Unfortunately, they can be costly, lose effectiveness over time, and come with a host of side effects—from sexual dysfunction to suicidal thoughts²¹⁻²³—underscoring the need for safe, low-cost options.

Thanks to a team of pioneering French scientists, a next-generation *natural* alternative has come to light.

SAFFRON EXTRACT: A NOVEL INTERVENTION

Saffron has been used in traditional Persian medicine for centuries as a treatment for insomnia and anxiety.²⁴ French researchers Cédric Bourges and his colleagues Jacques Noury and Bernard Gout^{25,26} set out to corroborate these therapeutic effects and apply them to the treatment of eating disorders. They hypothesized that *“through an action against the anxiety component of eating behaviors such as food compulsions, saffron could alleviate the need for food between meals.”*²⁶

They first conducted a pilot placebo-controlled study using a proprietary saffron extract in a small group of healthy-to-slightly overweight women aged 46-61.²⁵ Their results were modest: 3.6 pounds lost, almost all of it fat weight, after 4 weeks.

More striking to Bourges and his team were the significant *declines* in reported feelings of hunger between meals, an effect that persisted until dinner in **25%** of women taking the saffron extract.²⁵ In contrast, **50%** of placebo recipients reported an increased desire to eat. By the end of the study, **100%** of women in the saffron group reported successful reduction in daily between-meal eating, as opposed to controls, who saw no improvement.

Armed with these encouraging findings, Bourges and his colleagues launched a full-scale trial of 60 slightly overweight women 25-45 years old.²⁶ This time, they focused specifically on women who reported frequent, anxiety-related between-meal and after-dinner snacking. Their goal was to test the saffron's psychotropic (mood-altering) potential in helping to reduce the anxiety behind compulsive eating.

Once again, weight loss was relatively modest: over one pound at the 2-week mark versus a slight gain in the placebo group. By 8 weeks, the average weight loss had increased, reaching just over two pounds, with 26% of subjects losing up to **11 pounds**. Interestingly, women taking saffron saw a significant reduction in **thigh circumference**.

It was the *psychological* effect reported in the saffron group that again proved most compelling, especially given this cohort's susceptibility to compulsive between-meal consumption. The women reported a significant reduction in feelings of hunger before meals. They also experienced a significantly diminished “need” to snack between meals. The favorable alteration in these urges had concrete results. At baseline, women in both groups had reported an average of about 12 snacking episodes per week. After eight weeks, the average was just six episodes per week in the saffron group—a **50% reduction**.

These results validated the French team's hypothesis: something about this particular saffron extract was working to control the compulsion to eat in this vulnerable sample of women. They reported that *“subjects in the saffron group felt significantly more alert and energetic than the placebo group”*²⁶—feelings that correspond with emergence from sub-clinical depression and anxiety. As noted above, depression and anxiety are the foundation for compulsive eating. The key to this saffron extract's potency, it turned out, lay in its effects on levels of **serotonin**.

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