

# Why Fat Cells Really Grow — It's Not Just About Calories!

By Robert Ferguson

Let's say you want to lose weight. What's the first thing you do?

Depending on your past diets—or what you've seen others do—you probably start eating less and moving more. Some people think eating too much is the main reason we gain weight. Others blame carbs like bread, pasta, and rice. And some say it's all the deep-fried food.

**Guess what? There's more to the story.**

A recent study published in the science journal *Cells* showed something surprising: **fat cells don't grow just from eating food or calories**. The study was done by scientists who looked at fat cells in a lab. They found that fat cells grow the most when two things happen inside the body (Kaczmarek et al., 2025):

1. **Insulin levels are high** — Insulin is a hormone made by your body. It helps move sugar from your blood into your cells. But when there's too much insulin for too long, it tells your body to **store fat instead of burning it**.
2. **There is inflammation** — Inflammation is how your body protects itself when you're hurt or sick, like when you get a cut or a cold. That's normal. But when the body stays inflamed even when nothing is wrong, it's called **chronic inflammation**. This kind of inflammation can make your body hold on to fat and feel tired or sick.

**When both insulin and inflammation are high, fat cells grow big—and fast.** This makes it much harder to lose weight, feel healthy, and have the energy you need each day.

## What the Study Found

In the study, the scientists didn't just feed the fat cells sugar or fat. Instead, they gave the cells **insulin** and something called **cytokines**—tiny proteins that cause inflammation in the body.

This is like what happens in real life when people are under stress, sick, or eating lots of processed foods.

What happened?

- The fat cells **got much bigger**
- They became **unhealthy**
- They **stopped working the right way**

This is very similar to what happens inside the bodies of people who are overweight or struggling with their health.

## Why This Matters

Many grown-ups today have too much inflammation and too much insulin—and they might not even know it. This makes it hard to lose weight, even if they try hard with diet and exercise. If this sounds like you, please don't blame yourself.

When the scale won't budge, it can feel sad and frustrating. Some people say, "I'm just getting older." Others think, "It must be my hormones." And some feel stuck, so they start thinking about surgery or medicine like Ozempic, Zepbound, or Mounjaro.

That's when many people turn to **bariatric surgery**, such as **gastric sleeve**, **gastric bypass**, or other operations to shrink the stomach and force weight loss.

But you don't have to give up or settle. Meet Tina J. She is 63 years old and was one step away from taking GLP-1 medications and seriously considering surgery. Then she followed the simple steps in this article—balancing insulin and lowering inflammation—and she went from **216 pounds to 150 pounds**.

Now she feels great and has more energy every day.

If Tina can do it, you can too. Keep reading to learn how to help your body burn fat the healthy way—without surgery or strong medication.

## How Knowing This Helps

When I first met Tina during a free consultation, she was unsure about working with me. What I shared with her sounded too good to be true. But after I explained how **insulin** and **inflammation** affect weight loss, something clicked. It was new information—and it gave her **hope**.

She also liked that she didn't have to feel like she was on a strict diet. In her words:

**"If I can still eat carbs, I'm in!"**

Here's what we focused on—and the results were amazing. The weight came off, her energy came back, and she felt better every day:

- Ate real food in the right combinations using the **Diet Free Life** methodology
- Balanced meals to help keep **insulin levels steady**
- Took simple steps to **lower inflammation** in her body

When you do these things, your body starts to burn fat more easily. You feel more energy. And it doesn't feel like you're on a diet at all.

And what's even better? The same science that helped Tina—**is the same science proven in the study I shared earlier!**

## Final Thought

You don't have to starve yourself or give up your favorite foods to lose weight. You just need to understand what's really happening inside your body—and learn how to help it work better.

**If Tina can do it at age 63, you can too.**

Now, if I could give you one simple plan that works for everyone, I would! But the truth is, we're all different. Our bodies respond to food in different ways. And as we get older, that matters even more.

Some people have high **insulin resistance**. Others don't. Some people take medications that can slow down weight loss. That's why **there's no one-size-fits-all solution**. We must find the approach that works best for you.

I've worked with people who only needed a few helpful tips during a free consultation—and they went on to lose a lot of weight on their own. I've also worked closely with others through **personal coaching**, because that's what they needed to succeed.

So here's what you can do next:

- [Schedule a free consultation](#) with me, and we'll talk about your options
- Or start doing your own research to learn how to lower insulin and inflammation so weight loss becomes easier

Either way, I want you to know this: **Don't give up**. Connect the dots. Learn how your body works. And take steps that help you live your best, healthiest life.

**You've got this.**

## Reference

- Kaczmarek, I., Schüßler, K., Lindhorst, A., Gericke, M., & Thor, D. (2025). A pathoophysiologically hypertrophic 3T3-L1 cell model—An alternative to primary cells isolated from DIO mice. *Cells*, 14(11), 837. <https://doi.org/10.3390/cells14110837>

---

**Robert Ferguson** is a California- and Florida-based single father of two daughters, nutritionist, researcher, best-selling author, speaker, podcast and television host, health advisor, NAACP Image Award Nominee, creator of the **Diet Free Life** methodology, and **Chief Nutrition Officer for iCoura Health**. He also serves on the **Presidential Task Force on Obesity** for the National Medical Association and the **Health and Product Advisory Board** for Zinzino, Inc.