

Where Has All That Fat Loss Gone?

After months of healthy food selection, portion control and regular daily exercise, those favorite jeans become a little more roomy. Where does all that weight disappear when healthy habits pay off? Do fat cells ever go away for good?



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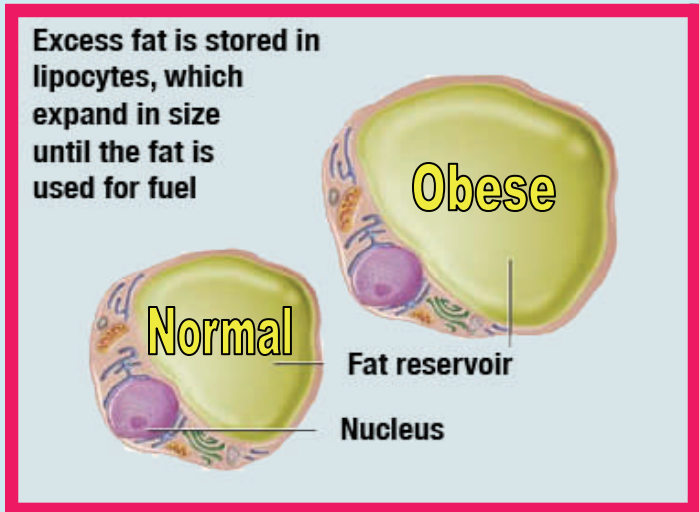
When we lose weight, the fat that is stored in fat cells (adipocytes) is reduced or burned off. But the fat cells themselves remain in place waiting to be filled again, smaller, yes, but still present.

Unfortunately, when we gain weight, we create more fat cells, so the more overweight we become the more fat cells we possess - all waiting to be enlarged.

Body fat breaks down during a series of complex metabolic processes. When you burn more calories than you consume, your body uses triglycerides for energy. (Triglycerides are the main constituent of body fat as well as the type of fats most often consumed by humans). The burning of calories causes your fat cells to shrink. In turn, triglycerides are broken down into two different substances — glycerol and fatty acids — which are absorbed into your liver, kidneys and muscle tissue. From there, the glycerol and fatty acids are further broken down by complex chemical processes that ultimately produce energy for your body.

These metabolic activities of your body generate heat, which helps maintain your body temperature. The resulting waste products — water and carbon dioxide — are excreted in urine and sweat or exhaled from your lungs.

If our bodies were cars, energy would be the gas to keep everything running. Lounging in front of the television is like cruising the strip, not much gas is used. Sprinting around a track is more like drag racing at maximum speeds. In short, more work means more energy.



The average woman has about 35 billion fat cells while the average man has around 26 billion fat cells. The number of fat cells increases dramatically with our weight. Obese people may have as many as 270 billion fat cells. In terms of health, we need to prevent the formation of excess fat cells from the very beginning of life! But that's another story.

Fat Cell Model

