

Ask Leyla: Falling asleep after a meal?

Q: What is causing my husband to fall asleep two hours after a meal every day? He is 78 years old and in excellent health and takes no medication.

A: There are many reasons a meal can induce sleepiness.



Was it a big meal? Sometimes the sheer caloric load of a meal can weigh us down. Circulation is directed toward the abdomen for digestion and absorption. But this is the easy answer. Given *when* your husband falls asleep has me suspecting something else.

Blood sugar increases after we eat. If it rises too high, as it would with insulin resistance or diabetes, it can cause sleepiness. The crash and burn of low blood sugar, or hypoglycemia, can also induce a nap. I witness this several times a week in our patients undergoing five-hour glucose tolerance tests. Our nurses supply a pillow and blanket so they can be comfortable.

The five-hour glucose tolerance test (GTT) is the only way to determine definitively if insulin resistance, diabetes or hypoglycemia exists. Normally, your doctor will only do a fasting blood glucose and hemoglobin A1c (HgbA1c). These are not enough. Also, as I'm writing this, the scientific literature is revealing that the HgbA1c test is less reliable than once thought. This explains why we often see a discrepancy between the GTT and the HgbA1c.

Hands down, my money's on the GTT. No contest.

A stealthier reason for sleepiness after eating is food sensitivities or allergies. Does your husband frequently consume the same foods during meals? Are there certain foods he craves and eats regularly, such as bread, sweets or dairy products? These are the prime suspects in food allergy and allergic addiction. The concept of allergic addiction reveals why we crave the foods that cause symptoms (a topic for a future newsletter, stay tuned).

Your husband would benefit from a five-hour GTT and food allergy/sensitivity test with an integrative practitioner who is knowledgeable in this area.

To your health!