

## **Gherlin**, the Gremlin of Weight Loss?

The evil force that makes you cheat on your diet, go off your diet, give up dieting altogether, gain back all the weight and more, over and over again regardless of your resolve and discipline, may now have a name: gherlin, “the hunger hormone.” Injections of gherlin escalate hunger, slow metabolism, increase production of growth hormone and decrease elimination of fat. The first appetite-regulating hormone known to originate outside the brain, gherlin is produced in the stomach and upper portion of the small intestine. When much of the stomach and a portion of the small intestine are blocked off, as in bariatric surgery, gherlin levels “drop like a rock,” according to a recent study at the University of Washington. Although small (n=28), the study has revived interest in the hunger hormone and is the first study to measure gherlin in dieters and post-gastric bypass patients. Researchers found gherlin levels of still-obese patients who lost large amounts of weight after bariatric surgery were a third or less than the lowest levels in people of normal weight. On the other hand, gherlin levels of people who lost large amounts of weight through dieting increased significantly from pre-diet levels. Given the small size of the study and the complex processes that influence weight, gherlin’s importance in the grand scheme of weight control remains to be seen, but a potential breakthrough for winning at weight loss is always good news