There are hundreds of weight-loss programs that vow to help create a lean, muscular body with little body fat. The reality is that while most popular diets and programs produce short-term results, the majority of people fail to achieve and maintain their weight-loss goals in the long run.

The real solution is taking a rational approach to weight loss by utilizing scientific breakthroughs in the understanding of human appetite regulation and metabolism. The centrepiece of any effective weight-loss program is utilizing unique blends of selected, highly viscous soluble (HVS) fibres. When properly combined these natural dietary fibres act synergistically to bind more water and create a greater gel-like mass than any other fibre alone.

When taken with water before or during meals, HVS dietary fibre blends bind up to 600 times their weight in water to form a gelatinous, viscous mass within the stomach. As a result, it produces a tremendous feeling of satiety (fullness) and reduces the absorption of calories. HVS dietary fibre blends are available in capsule form, powdered drink mixes, and meal replacement formulas.

When used within a framework of proper diet and lifestyle, HVS dietary fibre blends work to promote weight loss because they help achieve five key goals:
• Effectively promote satiety leading to a reduction of calories consumed.
• Improve the sensitivity of body cells to the hormone insulin.
• Increase metabolism and fat burning without using harsh stimulants.
• Reset the mechanisms that control fat cell size and body weight.
• Bind dietary fat and cholesterol within the intestinal tract and escort them from the body.

The beauty of utilizing a program based upon HVS dietary fibre is that it is both simple and highly effective. Clinical work at the Canadian Center for Functional Medicine indicates that at least 75 percent of those who are serious about losing weight will lose weight effectively by following these simple guidelines:

• Take a meal replacement formula that provides a minimum of five grams of HVS fibre twice daily as a meal replacement.
• For meals when you are not using the meal replacement formula, take two to five grams of HVS fibre five to 10 minutes before the meal.
• Use two to five grams of HVS fibre when hungry between meals, alone or with a healthy, low calorie snack.
• Drink six to eight glasses of water daily.
• Eat less! HVS fibre curbs the appetite. But you will still need to choose smaller portions of food and skip second or third helpings.
• Exercise. If you cut back on calories without exercising regularly, your metabolism will drop so low that it will be very hard to burn fat. It does not take much; a brisk walk for 30 minutes a day produces significant health and weight-loss benefits.

Michael T. Murray, ND, is the author of more than 20 books, including his latest *How to Prevent and Treat Diabetes with Natural Medicine* (Riverhead, 2003).