Can you believe this title? The cover does look suspiciously like a come-on, a buy-this-book title.

However, the contents are interesting and persuasive, the science explained in accessible ways for the average reader. For someone willing to add a particular supplementary fiber, branded as PGX and sold in capsule or powder, and willing also to adhere to a healthy, not depriving diet, the results are probably as predicted: a leveling of blood sugar throughout the day, fewer cravings, and subsequent weight loss.

What is this PGX? The primary ingredient in the powder is Konjac-mannan (Amorphophallus konjac). According to Wikipedia, Konjac is grown in East Asia “for its large starchy corms, used to create a flour and jelly of the same name. It is also used as a vegan substitute for gelatin.” A corn is an underground tuber-like stem. The konjac is helped along with some sodium alginate and xanthan gum. The three together, when you add water, make a highly viscous product, and viscosity is the key to why PGX would work as the authors describe.

Why is viscosity important? The book maintains that it’s one of three properties that lead to feeling sated: volume, glycemic impact, and viscosity.

Volume makes your stomach feel full; glycemic impact provides blood sugar and energy; and viscosity – because the soluble fiber absorbs a lot of water – prolongs digestion and prolongs the absorption of your food. So you feel full for longer and you won’t suffer from
those “sugar lows.” Obviously, it’s important that you drink plenty of water with PGX – and not low-cal sodas, which the authors remind us, correlate to more, not less, weight gain in the U.S. population.

The claim, in short is that: “PGX possesses an ability to increase insulin sensitivity, reduce blood sugar volatility, and produce volumetric effects. It is very viscous and produces a targeted effect of reducing those factors that increase appetite while simultaneously increasing those factors that decrease appetite.” (p. 83)

The chapters on blood sugar stability and on stress describe a too-familiar circular pattern that leads to insulin resistance, the precursor of diabetes Type II, and weight gain. You can jump into this circle anywhere. Starting, say, with stress: stress produces cortisol, which raises blood sugar levels, leads to abdominal fat cell growth, and reduces the feel-good-endorphin serotonin. A drop in serotonin often produces carbohydrate craving and eating bread or sweets. Cortisol also promotes insulin resistance, which stimulates fat cell growth and diminishes the feeling of satiety after eating. More eating, especially carbohydrates, coupled with insulin resistance leads to excess blood sugar, which, in turn, calls for more insulin, which in its turn causes a drop in blood sugar (result: hunger) and then more cortisol to deal with the drop in blood sugar. And the cycle goes on rolling, while the fat cells go on accumulating.

Amorphophallus konjac (rivieri) is a food species of Yunnan and Sichuan, East Asia. It is grown in fields by upland farmers. Its tubers contain "Konjac glucomannan" which is an excellent dietary fiber. This polysaccharide can reduce total cholesterol and blood glucose, leading to weight loss.

Whether with the help of PGX or through other means, it’s wise to break that cycle. Murray and Lyon also include sample menus and quite a few recipes, as well as practical advice for those wanting to lose weight. We’ve heard them before, but a review doesn’t hurt: small portions, eating slowly (chew longer, put your fork down between mouthfuls), plan ahead, and never eat except at table.

One of my favorite suggestions is to include the medium-chain fatty acid coconut oil in your diet. It is touted elsewhere as an immune system booster. Here the authors point out that it takes more energy to digest it than it provides, i.e., a net loss of calories. Be sure, however, to buy organic coconut oil.
In summary, scientific studies show that PGX can when used regularly:

* Balance blood sugar levels
* Lower the glycemic index of meals
* Support health weight loss
* Reduce food cravings

Who are the authors? The much-published Dr. Michael T. Murray is considered one of the most respected and reliable authorities on natural medicine and nutrition. Dr. Michael R. Lyon, similarly trained in both allopathic and natural medicine, has published on a number of topics, including diabetes. They are both published in peer reviewed medical journals and are both dedicated to understanding and presenting the science behind medicine. PGX was developed in collaboration with the medical research team at the University of Toronto who gave us the glycemic-index.

Dr. Murray’s PGX products for Weight Loss and Diabetes Control and Organic Coconut Oil are available locally at Cambridge Naturals.

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