- Body weight

Stress, sleep still key to weight management —expert

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Stress and inadequate sleep can play a significant role in a person's ability to achieve and maintain a healthy weight, a physician said, as a growing range of products and medications are being promoted for weight management.

Dr. Nemencio Nicodemus Jr., a professor at the University of the Philippines - College of Medicine's Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and an attending consultant at the Department of Medicine of the Philippine General Hospital, said weight management requires more than simply reducing calorie intake.

He said unmanaged stress and insufficient sleep can increase cortisol levels, which may reduce the body's sensitivity to insulin and make blood sugar regulation more difficult.

Nicodemus also cautioned against relying on slimming products for quick results, saying weight loss from some teas may primarily reflect water loss and changes in bowel movements rather than a reduction in body fat.

"The weight loss associated with slimming teas may therefore largely reflect water loss and altered bowel movements rather than meaningful reductions in body fat," Nicodemus said.

"Rapid water-weight loss from teas or extreme diets is not equivalent to durable fat loss, and short-term results are unlikely to persist without lasting changes in behavior and lifestyle," he added.

Nicodemus said weight management should take into account several factors, including hormones, muscle mass, genetics, metabolism, sleep, stress, and lifestyle.

He is among the speakers at the Grand Scientific Symposium from October 8 to 9, 2026, at Novotel Manila Araneta City. The event will cover weight management and evidencebased strategies for lifelong wellness, andropause, safe schools and workplaces, oral health, and precision cancer medicine.

Nicodemus also discussed apple cider vinegar gummies, slimming and detox teas, and prescription medications, which have gained attention as weight-management products.

A 2025 meta-analysis of 10 randomized controlled trials involving 789 participants found that daily consumption of apple cider vinegar was associated with reductions in body weight, body mass index and waist circumference.

However, researchers have raised methodological concerns about at least one influential trial involving Lebanese adolescents and young adults, citing improbable data characteristics and unusually large effect sizes. These concerns have raised questions about the reliability of the study's findings and their potential influence on the overall evidence.

Slimming and detox teas, meanwhile, may produce their effects through appetite suppression, metabolic stimulation, or laxative and diuretic effects rather than through established mechanisms for reducing body fat.

A 2026 content analysis found that 91.7 percent of the sampled diet teas contained senna leaf, a laxative, despite being marketed using "natural" slimming imagery.

Certain weight-loss products have also been linked to adverse effects in case reports. One report, for instance, described acute hepatitis in a teenager associated with consumption of a Chinese green tea product. The condition resolved after the product was discontinued.

The Cleveland Clinic said laxatives are medicines that help stimulate bowel movements to relieve constipation, while diuretics help the kidneys remove excess salt and water from the body through urine. (GMA News)