

Hope of jab to cure obesity

By Sarah Knapton SCIENCE EDITOR

A CURE for obesity could be just an injection away after scientists at Harvard and MIT discovered that a tiny DNA tweak causes the metabolism to burn up excess fat.

Although it was thought that piling on the pounds was largely due to overeating and lack of exercise, researchers now believe that genetics plays a crucial role in whether fat is stored or used up as energy.

People with higher BMIs (Body Mass Index) often carry a variant of the FTO

gene, sometimes known as the "obesity gene". Now researchers at Harvard and MIT have discovered that the "obesity gene" switches on two other genes which stop fat being burned off as heat. And, crucially, they have shown it is possible to turn off those genes using a groundbreaking gene editing technique which snips out bad DNA code and replaces it with the correct sequence.

The scientists believe the technique could prevent or even cure obesity in those people with the faulty gene and negate the effects of a high-fat diet.

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