

# Scientists study bears to learn about obesity

By Jonathan D. Rockoff, Wall Street Journal

PULLMAN, Wash. — On a recent visit to a laboratory where he researches obesity, Kevin Corbit walked over to one of the patients he is studying to say hello. Then he clasped a claw.

Corbit, a scientist at drug maker Amgen Inc., is conducting his research on grizzly bears. He believes insights gleaned from the animals, who can take in as much as 58,000 calories in a day and weigh 1,000 pounds, could reshape understanding of obesity and identify new treatments for a condition that has stymied doctors and drug developers.

“When I thought about obesity, I thought about Yogi bear,” Corbit says.

*Ursus arctos horribilis* isn’t the typical lab rat. A grizzly can lift a heavy tree trunk—with one paw. In the wild, the bears win duels with wolves and mountain lions. They are powerful enough to tear through the side of a barn or even crush a small car. Also, the bears growl.

But bears do know a thing or two about weight gain, and that makes them more like people than rats whose genes are manipulated to make them obese.

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