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Personal Contact May Help Long Term Weight Control and Blood Pressure

Researchers from the American Heart Association have reported that people who want to achieve long term weight maintenance may benefit from personalized monthly contact interventions. When compared with two other weight loss methods, monthly personal counseling was best at keeping weight off long term. Despite the importance of obesity control, few studies have tested strategies to maintain weight loss over long periods. “We know how to help people lose weight in a healthy way, but we know very little about how to help them to keep the weight off,” said Laura P. Svetkey, M.D, lead author of the study and professor of medicine at Duke University Medical Center in Durham, N.C. The beginning of the study (Phase 1) consisted of 20 weekly group sessions held over six months, during which participants received information about key ingredients in long term weight loss: consuming fewer calories, increasing moderate physical activity, and eating a healthy diet.

Researchers recommended DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension), a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole-grain and high fiber foods, that uses low-fat and fat-free dairy products and is low in total and saturated fat and sodium.



DASH has been found to lower blood pressure and cholesterol even without weight loss. Participants were encouraged to use tools like self-monitoring and goal-setting, and counselors helped them remember their initial motivations. The group sessions also provided participants with social support from other participants. At the end of Phase I, 61 percent of the participants in the trial were eligible for Phase II, which lasted for 30 months. Participants were eligible for phase II if they had lost at least nine pounds and as much as 66 pounds.

After 30 months the trial resulted in weight loss for 71 percent of the study participants, with 37 percent of participants weighing at least 5 percent below their beginning weight. Although modest (the personal contact group regained just 3.3 fewer pounds than the other groups) a small reduction can still have large potential health benefits. “Each pound of weight loss can lower blood pressure by as much as a millimeter of mercury, and the more weight you lose, the bigger the blood pressure effect,” Svetkey said.

“Each pound of weight loss is estimated to lower the risk of developing diabetes by 8 percent.” Although this study suggests an effective way to attain long term weight loss, more research is needed to ascertain the most feasible and cost-effective mode of intervention.

Sweet Substitutes

Natural, Zero-Calorie Sweetener Introduced

Cargill recently introduced rebiana, brand name TRUVIA™, a natural, zero-calorie sweetener made from a part of the stevia leaf. Leaves from the stevia plant are harvested and dried, then soaked in fresh water and purified to make a food-grade sweet ingredient. The finished product, rebiana, is 200 times sweeter than sugar. TRUVIA™ reportedly has a clean, sweet taste. Sweeteners from the stevia plant currently are allowed in dietary supplements in the United States but are not approved for foods and beverages. Cargill and The Coca-Cola Company have formed a partnership to develop rebiana, according to *Food Business News* (FBN). The partnership will seek to gain Generally Recognized As Safe (GRAS) status for rebiana in foods and beverages in the United States.

Several Asian and South American countries have already approved stevia-based sweeteners for use in foods and beverages. Corn Products International has entered into an agreement with Morita Kagaku Kogyo Co. Ltd., for the exclusive license of its patented stevia strain, manufacturing technology and stevia production, as well as global marketing and distribution rights. FBN also reports that Corn Products will market the sweetener under the name Enliten™, file for regulatory approval in the United States and market the sweetener in Latin American and Asian countries where it is already approved for use in foods and beverages.



Experts Weigh In

Maintaining Weight and an Active Lifestyle, Yes It Can Be Done!

Weight loss and successful weight maintenance may be hindered by a myriad of obstacles: travel, parties, and weekends. If it isn't one of those hurdles that stand in the way of healthful eating, it may be a number of other events. The following tips can help people avoid five of the most common obstacles that get in the "weigh:"

Situation #1: Travel

Airplanes or long car trips don't have to mean mindless snacking or starvation. Having snacks on hand will help stave off hunger. Pre-portioned or reduced calorie snacks such as 100 calorie packs, sliced veggies, or pretzels are good options. To burn extra calories, plan days around sight seeing and outdoor activities. If traveling for business and eating out is on the menu, practice portion control. Try eating at tapas restaurants where portions are closer to the recommended serving size.

Situation #2: Parties

If there is an upcoming party, make a low-fat, low-calorie version of a favorite dish. The host or hostess will appreciate the help, and this will assure healthful options are available. An hour or so before the party, have a snack for some sustenance. Enjoy the party foods but do so in moderation. Try to pick healthier options such as fruit, tortilla chips and salsa or vegetables, even stuffed mushrooms. Think variety and choose foods that are different colors. Opt for lighter beverages such as diet soda, light lemonade, or zero-calorie flavored water.

Situation #3: Eating Out

Look for restaurants with healthier options. Restaurant portions are typically much larger, so try splitting an entrée. Have an appetizer as an entrée or ask for half the meal in a to-go container in advance. Also, adopting small habits such as ordering salad dressings on the side and staying away from excess sauce and cheese will help cut out extra calories.

Situation #4: Holidays

Holidays have long been associated with overindulgence. Although this may be justified by thinking it will be an entire year before these foods are eaten again, those extra calories don't come off as easily as they go on. To help with weight maintenance over the holidays, "lighten up" by making healthier versions of the holiday foods. Choose smaller portions as there will be leftovers. Most importantly, enjoy the people around you. Eat slowly and sip some water between bites, this will allow your brain to catch up with your stomach and realize it is full.

Situation #5: Weekends

Healthful eating seems easy during the first part of the week but as the weekend nears those same healthful habits succumb to the temptations of the weekend. Instead of using the weekend to eat in excess, plan some time to go hiking, go to the park or get together with friends for a bike ride.

Just remember, successful weight loss/maintenance is a lifestyle and not a diet. Making small changes over the long term can make a big difference. Check out <http://www.caloriecontrol.com/recipes.html> for healthy recipes and information.



What's New and What's True?

The Truth Behind Low Calorie Sweeteners and Weight Gain

Low-calorie sweeteners have been a hot topic in recent months with many headlines questioning the usefulness of sugar substitutes for weight control and weight loss. However, these “snapshot” headlines do not reveal the whole story. Read on for more information and to learn “What’s New and What’s True.”

“Dietary Intake and the Development of the Metabolic Syndrome. The Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities Study,” published in January in the journal *Circulation*, alleged an increased risk of metabolic syndrome (which can lead to an increased risk of heart disease and diabetes) from diet soda consumption. However, this study contained some major flaws. The study was observational and did not show cause and effect. Further, the study authors offered no definitive conclusions or reasons as to why diet soda would increase the risk of metabolic syndrome. Over half (60.5 percent) of the population who participated in the study either already had metabolic syndrome at the beginning of the study or developed it during the nine-year follow-up. Thus it is not clear if diet soda consumption is related to an increased risk of developing metabolic syndrome or if participants used diet soda to help manage their weight, diabetes, etc.

“A Role for Sweet Taste: Caloric Predictive Relations in Energy Regulation by Rats,” published in *Behavioral Neuroscience*, also alleged a link between low-calorie sweeteners and

weight gain. However, previous studies in humans have shown that low-calorie sweeteners can be helpful in weight control. “Rising obesity rates have now been linked to the presence of sugars in the food supply and to the absence of sugars from the food supply,” noted Dr. Adam Drewnowski, Director, Center for Public Health Nutrition at the University of Washington. “Consumers find it difficult to know who to believe. Suggesting that low-calorie sweeteners actually cause people to gain weight is an irresponsible direct application of rat models to dietary counseling and to public health,” Drewnowski stated. The small sample size and the fact that findings in animal studies are not necessarily applicable to humans elicit cause for concern. “This study oversimplifies the causes of obesity,” said Beth Hubrich, a registered dietitian with the Calorie Control Council. “The causes of obesity are multi-factorial. Although surveys have shown that there has been an increase in the use of ‘sugar-free’ foods over the years, portion sizes of foods have also increased, physical activity has decreased and overall calorie intake has increased,” she added.

Additionally, a study published in the *Journal of Food Science* found that people who use reduced-calorie products (containing low-calorie sweeteners) not only had a better quality diet but also were more likely to consume fewer calories than those who did not use reduced-calorie products.

Leading health groups agree that low-calorie sweeteners and the products that contain them can help people manage their weight as part of an overall healthy diet. According to the American Dietetic Association, “Non-nutritive sweeteners added to the diet have been shown to promote modest loss of weight and, within a multi-disciplinary weight-control program, may facilitate long term maintenance or reduction in body weight.” No major health group is making a change to its dietary recommendations based on these studies.

Visit www.caloriecontrol.org for additional information about the use of low-calorie sweeteners in the diet.



Get Physical

What Kind of Exercise is Best?

Depending on the reasons for exercise, different types of activity may be better for different people. Weight-bearing exercise forces the feet and legs to support body weight. Activities like walking, jogging, aerobics, dancing, stair climbing and skating are all examples of weight-bearing exercise. Weight-bearing exercise may help delay osteoporosis and assist in maintaining bone durability. Resistance exercise involves moving weight, such as on a machine in the gym or even body weight. This type of exercise strengthens and tones muscles, which helps to strengthen bone in that area. Free weights, weight-training machines or

exercise bands are examples of resistance exercise. For persons with knee or joint problems, non-weight-bearing activity may be best. An effective type of non-weight-bearing activity is swimming. Both swimming laps and water aerobics provide a great aerobic workout.

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity three to five days a week. According to ACSM, "Moderate physical activity means working hard enough to raise heart rate and break a sweat, yet still be able to carry on a conversation." Exercising at this intensity would take

about as much energy as a brisk walk. No matter which activity you choose, you can do it all at once, or split it up during the day. If performing multiple exercise bouts throughout the day, each bout should be at least 10 minutes long.

Physical activity and nutrition work in tandem to promote optimal health. Being physically active increases the amount of calories burned and eating healthfully controls the amount of calories consumed. For a free diet assessment and exercise information visit www.caloriescount.com

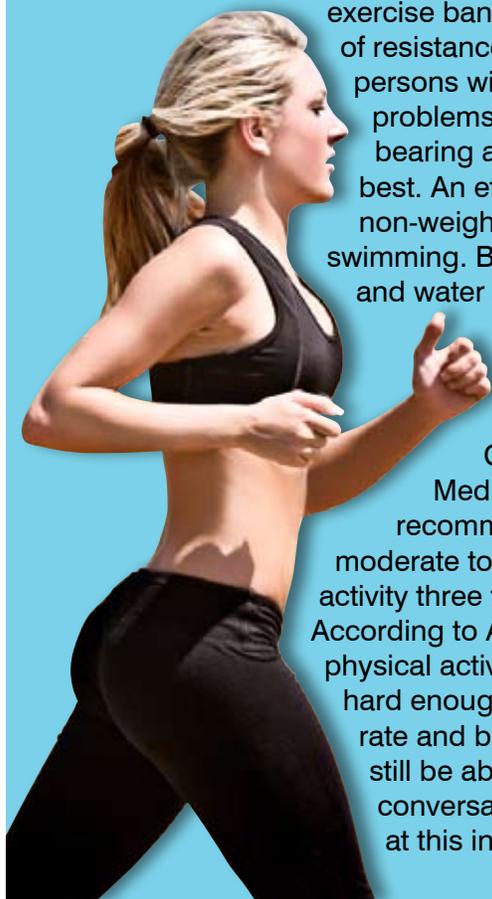
Calorie Control commentary

Providing timely information on low-calorie and reduced-fat foods and beverages, weight management, physical activity and healthy eating.

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