

# Calorie Control

C O M M E N T A R Y

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## Kids and Teens Growing Heavier Warning: Diabetes Ahead

**T**here are more obese and overweight adult Americans than ever before. And, this problem is now plaguing children. In fact, the number of obese and overweight children has increased so much that Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher has been quoted as saying, "This is the most overweight, obese generation of children in our history."

According to statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), children and teens are continuing the weight-gaining trend seen in the last two decades. The results from the 1999 survey indicated that 13 percent of children between the ages of six and 11 are overweight. Fourteen percent of teens between the ages of 12 and 19 are overweight.

But the problem in children is not limited to increased weight. Type 2 diabetes, predominantly seen in adults, is now affecting children in large numbers. Approximately

300,000 children have type 2 diabetes, with 85 percent of the cases due to obesity. (Type 2 diabetes is generally associated with being overweight and commonly referred to in the past as "adult-onset diabetes" because it did not usually occur until later in life.)

In fact, there has been such a large increase in the number of children with type 2 diabetes that the CDC is launching a new national study to help researchers track the disease and determine how prevalent it truly is in children.

Dr. Francine Kauffman, head of Pediatric Endocrinology at the Childrens Hospital in Los Angeles, CA, and vice president of the American Diabetes Association, told *Commentary* that she has seen a huge difference in the number of children diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. Before, only two to four percent were

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**Saccharin  
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**“Sound, new scientific research results of more than two decades of study have decisively proven saccharin’s safety.”**

— **Rep. Joe Knollenberg (R-MI)**

**A study, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, revealed that a six-month interactive Web-based weight loss program helped participants lose approximately nine pounds after three months and nine more pounds after six months.**

## Congress Gives Saccharin A Clean “Bill” Of Health: Warning Label Removed

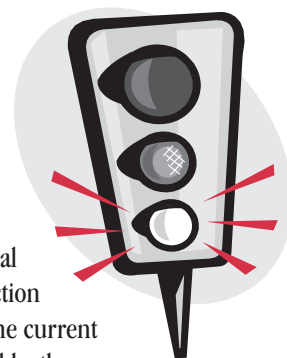
**C**ommentary previously reported that the federal government’s National Toxicology Program (NTP) removed saccharin from its *9th Report on Carcinogens*. And more recently, you may have noticed the warning label on saccharin products has been removed. Late last year, former President Clinton signed legislation to remove the warning label that had been required on saccharin-sweetened foods and beverages since 1977. After almost a quarter century, the book finally has been closed on one of America’s major food safety scares of the seventies.

Congress passed Rep. Joe Knollenberg’s (R-MI) aptly named “SWEETEST” Act (H.R. 5668), Saccharin Warning Elimination via Environmental Testing Employing Science and Technology Act, as part of the Health and Human Services (HHS) Appropriations Bill (H.R. 4577). “Sound, new scientific research results of more than two decades of study have decisively proven saccharin’s safety,” Rep. Knollenberg explained.

According to Rep. Knollenberg, the National Toxicology Program’s action “negated the need for the current warning label mandated by the Saccharin Study and Labeling Act of 1977 on all products containing saccharin. The Food and Drug Administration recognized that the mandated warning label is inappropriate and agreed to support its repeal.”

Today, following more than a century of safe use, saccharin remains an important sweetener in a wide range of sugar-free and low-calorie products and is approved in over 100 countries.

To learn more about saccharin visit [www.saccharin.org](http://www.saccharin.org).



## New Exercise for Weight Loss Includes “Surfing” the Internet

**M**any “surfers” are finding the answers to their dieting questions on the Internet. Studies indicate that Web-based programs and email can help people lose weight. A study, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, revealed that a six-month interactive Web-based weight loss program helped participants lose approximately nine pounds after three months and nine more pounds after six months.

Researchers, led by Deborah Tate of Brown Medical School, examined two different Internet-based weight loss programs. One group attended an in-person weight loss group and was given additional resources for weight loss on the Internet. The other group also attended the in-person weight loss program and received behavioral lessons each day via e-mail. Members of this group were also asked to submit diaries with their calorie consumption and exercise frequency. A behavioral therapist responded via email concerning the entries in the diary. In addition, members of this group were able to participate in an online bulletin board.

The researchers found that the participants who received the more structured program (including the Internet behavior intervention) not only cut back on the amount of calories consumed, but also lost more weight and reduced their waist circumferences.

Researchers at Baylor College of Medicine have also found that patients who used the Internet to track their weight and received



feedback from dietitians lost an average of six pounds. Participants were able to reduce LDL cholesterol, triglycerides and blood glucose levels as well.

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[www.livingheart.com](http://www.livingheart.com)

## Low-Calorie/Low-Fat Bulletin

### MORE SUCRALOSE PRODUCTS ON THE WAY

For those who love the taste of sugar, but hate the calories there is good news. A new sucralose (also known as Splenda®) manufacturing plant has been established in MacIntosh, Alabama. Look for more products to hit grocery store shelves in the near future. In the meantime, you can check out [www.splenda.com](http://www.splenda.com) to find the latest information about this low-calorie sweetener.

### ASPARTAME — SCIENCE SUPPORTS ITS SAFETY

Although many consumers and health professionals may have received an email claiming that aspartame causes everything from Gulf War Syndrome to lupus, they shouldn't believe this Internet Hoax. Health organizations such as the American Dietetic Association and the American Diabetes Association support the use of aspartame. Recently, the Aspartame Web site — [www.aspartame.org](http://www.aspartame.org) — was updated and includes accurate scientific information about this low-calorie sweetener. Log on today to learn the truth from credible, scientific organizations.

### EXPERT PANEL FINDS TAGATOSE SAFE

Tagatose has been the subject of many studies for almost a decade. And, now, a scientific panel of experts has declared that tagatose — a low-calorie sweetener — is safe for use in foods.



Tagatose occurs naturally and looks similar to sugar. It is 90 percent as sweet as regular sugar, but it has only one-third of the calories found in

sugar. Manufacturers of tagatose believe it will be ideal for products such as diet health bars, candies, chewing gums, ice-cream substitutes and diet soft drinks. Tagatose may

also be substituted in recipes that call for sugar. The company has notified the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of its GRAS (generally recognized as safe) determination for tagatose. The notification is under FDA review.

### TREHALOSE RECEIVES GRAS STATUS

FDA has issued a letter stating that the agency has no objections to GRAS status for trehalose, which is 45 percent as sweet as sucrose. According to Jim Kappas, director of marketing for Cargill, trehalose is not considered a sweetener but rather a means of preserving cell structures in food. It may be used in beverages, surimi, dehydrated fruits and vegetables and white chocolate baked in cookies. It also may aid in the freezing and thawing process of many foods.

### LOW-CALORIE SWEETENERS AND DIET CANDY IN DEMAND

The demand for low-calorie sweeteners is on the rise, according to a recent issue of *Beverage R&D*. The Freedonia Group (an industrial market research firm based in Cleveland) conducted a study titled, "Artificial Sweeteners & Fat Replacers." The study indicates that the demand for sweeteners will continue to rise approximately three percent each year and will reach 28.7 million pounds or \$685 million by the year 2004. Also, the *Food Institute Report* noted that based on Information Resources Inc.'s market research over the past 12 months the appeal of candy in drug stores is increasing. Several segments tracked by the firm saw double digit increases. One of those segments was diet candy, which rose 18 percent.



Diet candy is not the only "diet" product on the rise. Diet soft drink sales have seen an increase, according to *Beverage Industry*. The article reported that diet soft drinks increased their volume anywhere from 2.5 percent to almost 12 percent. In related news, according to *Reuters*, Pepsi One (sweetened with acesulfame potassium and aspartame) was the number one selling new consumer product in 1999-2000. Pepsi One had \$225.3 million in sales in its first 52 weeks of distribution.

### USERS OF FAT-MODIFIED FOODS HAVE BETTER DIETS

Researchers using the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) 1996 Continuing Survey of Food Intake by Individuals (CSFII) found that users of fat-modified foods were more likely to have a diet that provided less than 30 percent of total calories from fat and more nutrients. The researchers noted, "Individuals who use fat-modified foods, particularly high-users of these foods, not only are more likely to reduce fat intake, but they do so in a manner that leads to a consumption of a more nutrient dense diet." The study was published in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*.

### THE EFFECTS OF POLYDEXTROSE IN CHINESE PEOPLE

Research published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* reveals that polydextrose may act similarly to fiber. Chinese men and women with average ages of 32.9 and 29.4, respectively, were randomly divided into groups and given four, eight or 12 grams of polydextrose. All groups consuming polydextrose saw significant improvements in bowel function and did not report laxation problems (abdominal distention, cramps or diarrhea).

Polydextrose, a low-calorie bulking agent (1 calorie/gram), is not digested or absorbed in the small intestine and has been shown in other studies to have effects similar to dietary fiber. The authors noted, "In conclusion, polydextrose is a dietary fiber that has many physiologic benefits."



# Today's Fad Diets, Too Good to be True? — Part III

## (Third Part of Series)

**"People are attracted to these types of diets because they seem fast and easy. And, for some you can eat all you want. However, some authors are not telling the whole truth."**

— **Dr. Judith Stern**  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,  
DAVIS

**F**ad diets continue to abound and without much success — Americans are only getting fatter. So what's the attraction and why are these diets still popular? Dr. Judith Stern, professor of nutrition and internal medicine at the University of California at Davis, and vice president of the American Obesity Association told *Commentary*, "People are attracted to these types of diets because they seem fast and easy. And, for some you can eat all you want. However, some authors are not telling the whole truth." No matter what the reason, these diets continue to make headlines. Here's what (and who) has been in the news lately.

### American Heart Association Takes a Stand on Dieting

The American Heart Association's (AHA) Nutrition Committee published an advisory paper in the October 8, 2001 issue of *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association*, regarding high protein diets and guidelines for the evaluation of these diets by healthcare professionals.

The committee reviewed several high-protein diets including the Atkins, the Zone, Protein Power, Sugar Busters and Stillman diets. Dr. Robert H. Eckel, a co-author of the advisory paper and professor of medicine at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, said, "High-protein items may also be high in fat. Some of the diets increase fat intake and reduce nutritionally rich foods such as fruits and vegetables, which is not a good approach to meeting a person's long-term dietary needs. Many of these diets fail to provide essential vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutritional elements, in addition to their high fat content." He added, "It's important for the public to understand that no scientific evidence supports the claim that high-protein diets enable people to maintain their initial weight loss. In general, quick weight-loss diets don't work for most people."

The advisory paper notes these diets may be especially risky for patients with diabetes, and that diets rich in animal protein, saturated fat and cholesterol can raise the LDL (or "bad") cholesterol. The paper also advises that studies have shown that a diet which includes complex carbohydrates, fruits, vegetables, non-fat dairy products and whole grains reduces blood pressure, and diets that omit or limit these foods may lessen the benefit of weight loss on blood pressure.

But Americans seem so desperate for weight loss that many of them use these diets, despite the fact that they may be jeopardizing their health. And the bottom line, according to researchers at the Bassett Research Institute in Cooperstown, NY, is that the majority of these weight loss plans are dramatically low in calories and, of course, a reduction in calories results in weight loss.

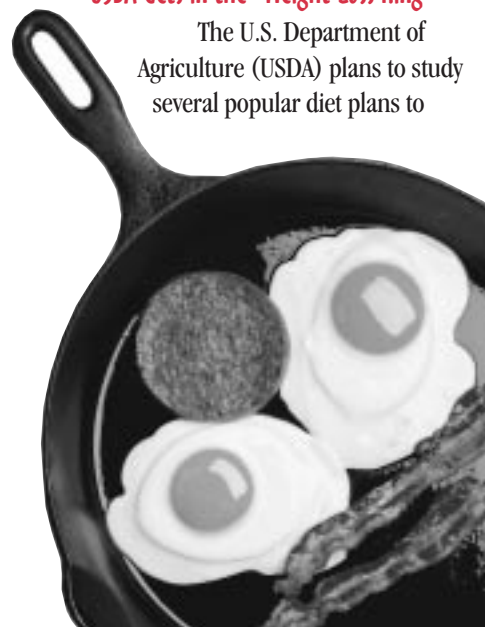
### Liquid Diets Make a Comeback

It may not have worked for Oprah, but manufacturers are again trying to convince consumers that liquid diets will make them slim. An article in the *Wall Street Journal* noted that liquid diets are making a comeback — despite the fact that they were deemed unhealthy approximately a decade ago. According to the article, prescription liquid diets were a \$235 million market last year. Although the market is much less than what it was in 1989 (\$419 million), the market has seen a 45 percent increase since 1997.

But it is not just the market that has changed, the liquid diets themselves have also changed. The 400-500 calorie liquid diets used ten years ago have been replaced by 800-1000 calorie diets and many of the new plans now include fruits and vegetables or a prepackaged meal of solid food. Some researchers believe that liquid diets are still the best way to achieve rapid weight loss for severely obese patients. One problem remains — after the weight is lost, many patients regain their weight once they return to solid foods because they have not learned healthy eating habits.

### USDA Gets in the "Weight Loss Ring"

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) plans to study several popular diet plans to



## Today's Fad Diets, Too Good to be True? – Part III *(continued)*

determine which is the most effective. In the first phase of the study, a white paper examining the current scientific literature on weight loss revealed that it is not the proportion of fat, carbohydrate and protein that is eaten but instead the number of total calories that determines weight loss. The findings from Phase I were published in a supplement of the *Journal of Obesity*.

The research study design will be coordinated and implemented by the USDA's Human Nutrition Research Center. The largest part of the study will be devoted to several prospective studies on long and short term health and nutrition issues associated with popular diets. The goal of the research is to provide clear, scientific information about weight loss and weight maintenance.

Findings based on the Continuing Survey of Food Intake by Individuals (CSFII) data, published in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, revealed that people who consume low to moderate fat diets are more likely to have diets lower in total overall calories. These diets are also associated with a lower Body Mass Index (BMI). Although researchers found that people following the Food Guide Pyramid had a higher energy intake, they were able to balance their caloric intake due to a higher level of physical activity. They also had a lower BMI than those who did not follow the Food Guide Pyramid. According to the researchers, "People are more likely to moderate energy intake by controlling fat intake. The data from the National Weight Registry reinforces this finding: 90 percent of long-term weight maintainers consume a diet with 20 to 30 percent of energy from fat, restrict total energy intake and participate in regular physical activity.



Only nine percent of the National Weight Registry sample maintain weight loss by diet alone and only one percent achieve weight maintenance by physical activity alone." According to researchers who compile the Registry, only one percent of those people who had maintained a 30-pound weight loss for one year or more had used a diet such as the Atkins program.

Dr. Stern told *Commentary*, "Americans are increasing in size because they are much less active, portion sizes have grown and food is good tasting and inexpensive. To lose weight you must look at the individual. Weight loss is difficult and keeping it off is harder. People are still looking for the magic bullet. We must empower the individual to make changes. Diets are not a 'one size fits all.' "

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**The data from the National Weight Registry reinforces this finding: 90 percent of long-term weight maintainers consume a diet with 20 to 30 percent of energy from fat, restrict total energy intake and participate in regular physical activity.**

### **Alternative Sweeteners, Third Edition is Now Available**

*Alternative Sweeteners, Third Edition* is now available. The revised edition can be ordered through Marcel Dekker at 212-696-9000. This comprehensive textbook highlights the latest developments in sweeteners and reflects the most up-to-date information.



**"If you're spending 10 minutes a day in the stairwell, going up and down the stairs, you can actually during the course of a year lose about 10 pounds."**

— **Nicole Kerr**  
CDC RESEARCHER

## Obesity Linked to Disease; Exercise May Help

The World Health Organization (WHO) announced in early spring that approximately one-third of cancers, such as colon, breast, kidney and cancer of the digestive tract, can be attributed to obesity and lack of exercise. In fact, the WHO panel noted that avoiding weight gain may actually be protective against some cancers. They also reported that exercise has been shown to help prevent breast and colon cancer. With 20 percent of adult Americans now obese (up from 12 percent in 1991), this is not good news. Additionally, 56 percent of Americans are overweight, according to the September 12, 2001 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

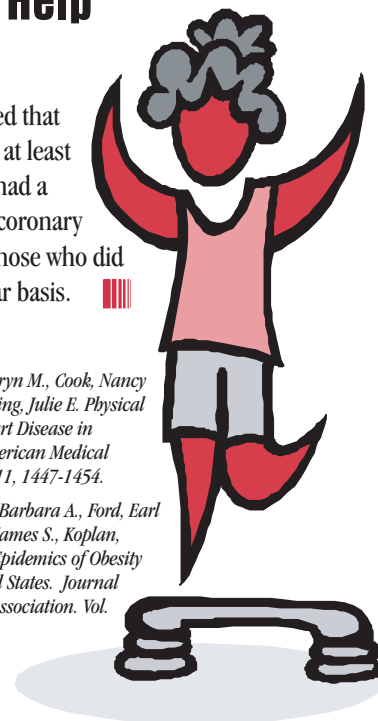
But, researchers from the CDC have found that exercise can be as simple as using the stairs rather than the elevator and may help people lose those extra pounds. Researcher Nicole Kerr commented, "If you're spending 10 minutes a day in the stairwell, going up and down the stairs, you can actually during the course of a year lose about 10 pounds." Additionally, another study published in the *Journal of the*

*American Medical Association* indicated that women who walked at least one hour per week had a much lower rate of coronary heart disease than those who did not walk on a regular basis.

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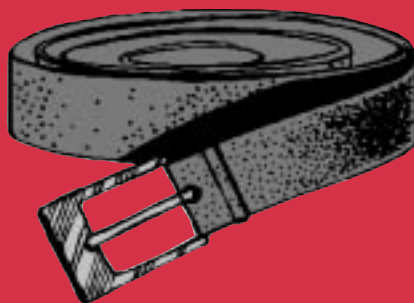
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## Calorie Control Council Web Site Adds New Features

Waist Circumference is among the newest features added to the Calorie Control Council's Web site ([www.caloriecontrol.org](http://www.caloriecontrol.org)). A panel of experts from the CDC in conjunction with their counterparts from 10 various countries has recommended that health professionals use body measurements — such as Body Mass Index (BMI) and Waist Circumference (WC) — to help predict mortality and the development of certain diseases such as type 2 diabetes. The recommendation was published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. Dr. Frank Vinicor, director of the CDC's diabetes program, said, "The data presented by the panel of international experts showed that cut-off points for BMI and WC consistently identify the health risks of excess weight." The report suggests that routine monitoring of BMI and WC may help signal a potential health problem such as diabetes, heart dis-



ease, arthritis and respiratory problems. To learn more about WC, visit: [www.caloriecontrol.org/bmi.html](http://www.caloriecontrol.org/bmi.html).

The Council's free online Calorie Calculator, on the Web at [www.caloriescount.com](http://www.caloriescount.com), has also added updated features. Consumers can use the new online food diary to help them keep track of the foods they eat throughout the day. There is also a current example of a food diary for consumers to view and learn more about how a food diary can be helpful in losing and maintaining weight. Additionally, consumers can vote using the new online poll regarding weight loss and low-calorie foods and beverages.

Both sites ([caloriecontrol.org](http://caloriecontrol.org) and [caloriescount.com](http://caloriescount.com)) are extremely popular and receive an average of 7.5 million hits and 350,000 visitors each month and have won numerous prestigious awards.



## Kids and Teens Growing Heavier *(continued from cover)*

diagnosed with this disease and now, roughly one-third of her patients are diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. "These kids are like a clock ticking. If they develop diabetes at age 10, they may develop other problems related to diabetes 10 to 15 years later. Up until this point, most people were not developing diabetes until later in life. A person who developed diabetes at age 50 might not begin having diabetes-related complications until they were 60 or 65." Health experts agree that if this trend is not reversed, it only follows that problems such as heart disease, blindness, nerve damage, kidney failure and amputations — all complications of diabetes — may occur earlier in life.

### What's Behind the Obesity Epidemic in Children?

So what's the cause of the rise in childhood obesity and diabetes? Although not all cases are the same, experts say that lifestyle is a large part of the problem. Unhealthy food choices, lack of exercise and being overweight all contribute to the problem.

The amount of walking and bicycle riding among children ages five to 15 dropped by 40 percent between 1977 and 1995. Less than one-third walk to school and participation in sports activities is showing a decline, as children reach and move into adolescence.

Surveys have shown that one-third of young children between the ages of two and 18 spend more than three hours a day watching television and almost one-fifth of young children spend more than five hours a day in front of the tube, with additional time spent playing video games. Exercise not only aids in maintaining a healthy weight, "exercise also helps with insulin sensitivity," commented Dr. Kauffman. She added that in the past, children and adolescents had safe areas in which to walk and play and now, unfortunately, this may no longer be the case.



The community in which these children are living may not have accessible and safe areas — which may be a deterrent to physical activity. Schools have also reduced the amount of physical education children and teens receive. Dr. Kauffman says schools are not doing enough and noted that physical education was one of the first things removed from the curriculum. Currently, only one-fourth of U.S. public schools

require their students to enroll and participate in physical activity.

However, the passing of the Physical Education for Progress Act (PEP), included in the omnibus fiscal year 2001 spending bill, is a major step to improving our youth's overall health and fitness. The bill authorizes up to \$400 million over the next five years for the PEP program, which awards grants to help initiate, expand and improve physical education programs for students in kindergarten through 12th grade.

### Is a "Heavy" Future Inevitable?

Many schools, realizing the vast weight problem, are trying to shape up. Due to pressure from federal officials, some schools have reduced the amount of fat, cholesterol and sodium from their breakfasts and lunches. They are also offering more fruits and vegetables. According to statistics from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), four out of every five schools now offer low-fat lunches. Although levels of total fat content have been reduced (from 38 percent of calories to 34 percent) they still have not met the 30 percent recommended by the government. Saturated fat content has been reduced as well.



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**"These kids are like a clock ticking. If they develop diabetes at age 10, they may develop other problems related to diabetes 10-15 years later. Up until this point, most people were not developing diabetes until later in life. A person who developed diabetes at age 50 might not begin having diabetes-related complications until they were 60 or 65."**

— **Dr. Francine Kauffman**  
CHILDRENS HOSPITAL,  
LOS ANGELES, CA

## Kids and Teens Growing Heavier *(continued from page 7)*

Although it is important that schools offer a choice of healthy fare, experts note that what a child does at home is indicative of what they do when they are at school. If parents allow their children to choose and consume fattier meals at home, they will continue this practice at school.

While health experts are not exactly certain of how to “fix” the growing obesity and diabetes epidemic, they do have some suggestions for parents. Dr. William Dietz, Director of the Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity at the CDC, says that family involvement is important. “Focusing on the adolescent [and child] alone is only going to make the problem worse. It’s not up to the adolescent to modify the home environment, but to the family. And it’s the parents who have to get everybody else in line,” by cooking and providing nutritious, healthful meals and keeping fruits and vegetables on hand rather than high-calorie and high-fat snacks. Health experts agree that it is important for the entire family to participate in a healthy diet and active lifestyle. Including regular exercise and encouraging children and teens to participate in extracurricular activities that involve some sort of physical activity are also important.



Dr. Kauffman said the solution to the problem, however, does not lie only with children and their parents. She noted, “This is a public health problem. It is not an individual problem — it’s society’s problem.” And fortunately, with nutrition counseling, physicians’ care and support from the family and the community, this condition and trend can be reversed.

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## Calorie Control C O M M E N T A R Y

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

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