

Nutrition Matters

Freedom From Dieting

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Healthy Weight – What is Success?

Success is eating well, being active and feeling good about ourselves. Success is not a lower number on the scale or a smaller dress size achieved by starving ourselves or over exercising.

“Diets” teach us that there are good and bad foods. But dietitians agree that there are no “forbidden” foods. Dieting can be dangerous, deprive us of important nutrients and leave us tired and irritable. It can isolate us socially and set us up for weight gain as well as a sense of failure. Healthy eating is not about “should” or “shouldn’t”, nor is it about depriving ourselves. It is important to tune-in to our “natural” hunger and stop feeling guilty for enjoying food.

Weight control is a myth! What we eat, how much we eat and how active we are play a role in determining what we weigh. But, there are also things that we cannot control such as our genetic background, our age and our health which also influence our weight. It is important to realize that people can be healthy at a number of weights.

We can’t control our weight, but we can improve our eating and activity habits. The real solution is to enjoy all foods in moderate quantities. When our expectations are realistic and we do not try to follow strict eating plans we have a better chance of achieving lasting success.

Did You Know?

Your ideas and actions about food and weight can have a great effect on your children. If you are physically active, and choose healthy foods on a regular basis, chances are your children are learning to do the same.



In Pursuit of the “Perfect” Body



The Myth...

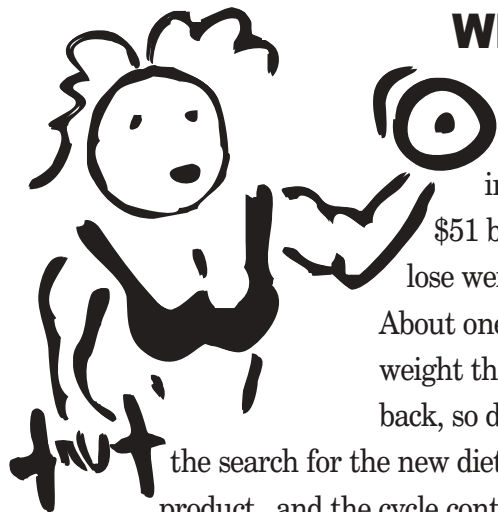
“Hi! You’re looking good! Have you lost weight?” This is just one example of how we are surrounded in our society by the pressure to be thin. After all, we learn at an early age that the “ideal” female is successful, popular, powerful, happy and thin. For males, the lean muscular body is “ideal”. Comments like these tell us that if we watch our diet and exercise we can all have this “perfect” life.

The Reality...

While society promotes this “ideal”, current trends show that Canadians are becoming heavier. As our weights continue to increase, so does our obsession with weight loss. Among adult women, 6 out of 10 are trying to lose weight. Even among women who are in a healthy weight range, 32% feel they need to lose more weight to be attractive.

Adult women are not the only victims. Girls have such a poor self-image by the age of 11, that almost 40% feel they need to lose weight. Males are also affected. As women strive to lose weight, men are trying to “bulk up” through excessive body building workouts and supplement use. The Canadian Centre For Drug-Free Sport reported in 1993 that 47% of males who used steroids did so to improve their physical appearance. The situation has not improved in recent years.

Who Profits...



The weight loss industry profits!
In 1995, the weight loss industry in North America earned about \$51 billion. But, over 95% of those who lose weight will regain it in three years.

About one third will regain even more weight than they lost. As the weight comes back, so does the sense of failure. This fuels

the search for the new diet or miracle weight loss product...and the cycle continues. Again, the weight loss industry profits at our expense.

For More Information:

BOOKS:

You Count, Calories Don't.
Linda Omichinski, Tamros Books Inc., Winnipeg, 1993.

Why Weight? A Guide To Ending Compulsive Eating.
Geneen Roth, Penguin Books, New York, 1996.

Intuitive Eating A Recovery Book for the Chronic Dieter
Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch, Saint Martins Press, New York, 1995.

Am I Fat? Helping Young Children Accept Differences in Body Size.

Joanne Ikeda and Priscilla Naworski, E T R Associates, 1993.

When Girls Feel Fat. Helping Girls Through Adolescence.

Sandra B. Freedman, Harper Collins, Toronto, 1997.

WEBSITES:

<http://www.dietitians.ca>

<http://www.eatright.org>



Learning to Listen to Your Body



Most of us have lost touch with our ability to tell when we are hungry and when we are full. This is especially true for “dieters”. The body has a natural way of letting us know how much food to eat. Success is listening to what your body is telling you.

Are You Really Hungry?

Pay attention to how your stomach is feeling before, during and after eating. Learn the difference between your body’s “need to eat” hunger cues and your desire to eat more food because it tastes good. Learn to recognize your “just full” feeling; if you’re uncomfortable, you’ve eaten more than you need.

***TIP:** Next time you reach for a second helping, imagine you are reaching for a package of stale crackers. Would you still continue to eat more? When we are really hungry, most of us would even eat a package of stale crackers!*

Space Your Meals and Snacks Throughout the Day.

Starving yourself often leads to stuffing yourself; eat before you feel that gnawing emptiness in your stomach.

***TIP:** Eat when your body tells you it’s running out of fuel from the meal you had earlier. You may feel a slight gnawing emptiness in your stomach. This may be every 3-4 hours. Eating a healthy snack at 4 PM may help prevent “stuffing” at dinner by taking the “edge” off your hunger.*

Slow Down Your Eating... Enjoy Your Food!

Take time to taste and enjoy each mouthful! Your body will send you the message that you are full, but it takes about 20 minutes. As you slow down, you will learn to recognize your “just full” feeling, before you eat more than you need.

It’s okay to satisfy a craving but learn to savour and enjoy each bite.

***TIP:** To help slow down your eating and enjoy your food pretend each bite costs you \$100; sometimes a smaller portion will be enough to satisfy a craving.*

Sound Familiar?

Helen is trying to lose weight. She feels frustrated because foods such as donuts, chips and cookies are often brought into the house. She worries that once she starts eating these foods she won’t be able to stop until they are all finished.

Helen believes that there are “good” and “bad” foods, and she feels like “a failure” if she eats “bad” foods. She has a fear of having foods such as donuts in the house. She worries that if she eats one she won’t be able to stop herself from eating 5 or 6 – and then she will have failed again. However, restricting foods eventually leads to overeating these same foods. If Helen allows herself to eat donuts, chips and cookies then they will no longer be special and she can enjoy them in moderation. Eventually she will focus more on the small, one-step changes that will lead to healthier everyday eating without guilt.

Tracy often eats out and she usually overeats. Afterwards, Tracy not only feels guilty but feels that she is too full to go for a walk and sometimes feels sick.



When socializing, like many people, Tracy does not eat when she is hungry nor stop when she is full. She feels overwhelmed with all the tasty choices and believes dinners out are a time to “let loose” and eat all she can. Instead, Tracy could think of this as an opportunity to try a variety of different foods and enjoy the taste of each food. With time, Tracy will learn to trust her body’s signals and stop eating when she is comfortably full. Success is being able to celebrate a meal with your friends and feel good, energized and satisfied!



A Few Little Changes Will Go a Long Way



A healthy lifestyle approach includes healthy food choices, spacing your meals and snacks throughout the day and being active. Make your busy life easier by planning ahead so that healthy choices will be on hand to satisfy your hunger. This way you will not starve yourself or rely on whatever is available. Invest your time now by planning your meals and snacks and shopping for the food you will need. Not only will you be eating healthy foods and feeling better for it, you will also save time and money.

Recipe for Change

1. Shopping List

Consider how many meals and snacks you will be eating at home and how many you will be packing. If your workplace has a refrigerator, you could even shop for foods such as yogourt, breads, veggies and sandwich fillings to keep on hand for lunches or snacks.

2. Away From Home

Stock up on healthy foods to keep in your car or other places for those times when you're likely to reach for the closest food available. You can try dried fruit, juice, cereals including instant oatmeal, fig cookies, fresh or canned fruit, peanut butter and whole grain crackers.

3. Planning Meals Is As Easy As ABC and D!

- A) Start with a grain product.
- B) Add the vegetables.
- C) Make meat, poultry or fish the side dish; a healthy portion takes up no more than 1/4 of the plate, or the size of a deck of cards. Or plan a meatless meal around lentils, beans, eggs, tofu, milk or cheese.
- D) Include fruit for dessert.

4. No Time To Prepare Vegetables?

The grocery store is full of convenient options: bagged, ready-to-eat salads, baby carrots and frozen vegetables. To save money, get in the habit of washing and chopping your vegetables as soon as you bring them home from the grocery store. For example, wash,

chop and store carrots, celery, cauliflower, and broccoli. This way they will be ready to use anytime you need them. Wash and dry lettuce, then wrap it in a tea towel or put it in a crisper for easy use.

5. Pressed For Time?

A healthy meal can be a frozen entrée with vegetables added. Or, it can be as easy as a sandwich, piece of fruit and glass of milk!

6. Double Cook Tonight, Save Time Tomorrow.

When you do cook, make extra portions to freeze for busy days or save for tomorrow's lunch or dinner.

7. No Time to Make Lunch?

Pack your lunch while you're preparing dinner or cleaning up afterwards.

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