

## Weight Management Much More Than Counting Calories

The headline above a recent e-news article says it all: The U.S. Is Eating Itself To Death. Most of us are well familiar with the statistics: over 60% of the population, including children, is either overweight or obese. To be fair, though, many of us are trying mightily to do something about it. The diet products industry is one of the fastest growing, most lucrative segments of the economy. Membership at health and fitness clubs is growing rapidly. Most of us understand the importance of proper diet and exercise. However, many are into their second, third or fourth attempts at losing weight, with no tangible results to show for their efforts. Why is that?

At the outset, we must recognize that weight loss does not simply mean shifting the balance of calories consumed and calories expended. While it is true that caloric intake and expenditure are key factors in weight loss, they are not the whole story, or even the biggest part of it.

Perhaps the most important factor influencing weight management is stress. That's right, stress! Any chronic stress pattern (physical, chemical, emotional, or mental) can sabotage even the most determined dieter. Why? The body's stress response is designed to deal with intense, episodic stress events. The stress response creates several significant changes in the body: major blood vessels dilate to allow more blood flow to the heart and muscles; the heart beats faster to supply that blood; the body secretes more glucose to fuel the muscles for "fight or flight;" the list goes on. After the threat is removed, these changes normalize themselves within a short time.

Today, however, instead of intense, infrequent episodes of stress, we face an environment where stress is nearly constant. The body tries to adapt as best it can to the new set of conditions. As the stress continues, the body must cope with a near constant secretion of glucose, originally destined for the muscles to fuel escape from a threat. However, there is no escape, no opportunity for the body to normalize itself. Therefore, the body must find a place to store all the glucose being secreted. Where is it stored? In the fat cells! At the same time, the cells of the body eventually develop resistance to the insulin which facilitates glucose transport, setting the stage for possible greater health problems down the road. That's why so many dieters are unsuccessful, no matter how hard they try. If the stress response is not normalized, the chances for successful weight loss are small, indeed.

Another key factor in the success of any weight management plan is the type of calories consumed. The popular literature is replete with various strategies designed to shed pounds; protein, carbohydrate, grapefruit, and vegetarian diets all tout their various advantages. Some people have, indeed, lost weight with these diets. But the fact that they are DIETS, something which dieters can discontinue after they reach their goals, speaks volumes as to their long term effectiveness. If a weight management program does not offer a long term strategy for weight loss maintenance, the dieter is doomed to eventual failure and WILL regain the lost weight. If a program does not include a shift to

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whole, natural foods with substantial enzymatic value, and away from processed, high sugar content foods, the weight will eventually be regained. That is why 2/3 of all dieters regain the lost weight within a year, and 97% regain it within five years.

I mentioned earlier that exercise was an integral part of any effective weight loss program. Once again, the type of exercise is crucial to the success of the program. The popular perception is that weight loss involves primarily aerobic exercise; that is only part of the equation. Aerobic exercise is, indeed, a valuable adjunct to a weight management program. But even more important is the inclusion of strength training in the program. Research has convincingly shown that strength training results in a virtually constant increase in metabolism, as opposed to the temporary increase in metabolism achieved from aerobic training. The building of muscle tissue naturally increases one's metabolism; the fact is that muscle burns many more calories per pound than does fat. And in deference to women who are concerned about body image, you don't have to look like a body builder to enjoy these benefits!

The good news is that there are proven, successful modalities in each of these areas which can help you achieve your goals. Very effective protocols are now available to help normalize the stress response. Combining laboratory testing of saliva samples with advanced nutritional supplementation and stress reprogramming, anti-stress programs can achieve positive results in a relatively short period of time, freeing the body from the vicious cycle of weight retention.

Likewise, diets which include healthy portions of whole, raw foods, and minimize or eliminate unhealthy foods like processed sugar and white flour, help to shift the body's metabolism from fat creation to fat elimination. State-of-the-art nutritional supplementation can help to stabilize blood sugar and healthily assist with both appetite control and fat loss. And there are wide varieties of proven exercise programs which cater to one's age, degree of mobility, and fitness goals.

In summary, reprogramming the stress response, the right kind of diet, and selecting the right kind of exercise program are all critical elements in a successful weight management program. Let us show you how!

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