

The Women's Center
Gynecology, Obstetrics and Gynecologic Surgery
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Weight Management at the Women's Center

Congratulations on your decision to improve your health! This introduction will talk briefly about how we plan to help you set and achieve your weight management goals. We are not offering a “diet” or “magic pill” as you may see at “Weight Loss Clinics” and on television or the Web. We are offering the opportunity for you to alter your lifestyle for the rest of your life! “Diet” is what you normally eat on a day-to-day basis. We all know what foods are good or bad for us and that we need regular exercise. We also know that we can't maintain weight loss (or life) on grapefruit peels and that there is no magic weight loss pill. Weight loss and control simply requires developing a lifelong commitment to healthy eating and exercise.

We initially developed this program for our patients who felt frustrated, fed up and tired of the endless cycle of weight loss attempts. We were also irritated that so many people were being ripped off by pseudo medical “weight loss clinics” and “nutritional supplements”. We are aware of the individual challenges (medical and social) that many of you face. Polycystic ovarian syndrome, thyroid disease, menopause, depression, and diabetes...these are just a few of the medical problems that can make weight management extremely difficult. Many also have problems with finding the time, place or funds to exercise.

Our approach to weight loss and health maintenance is very simple. We have purchased a body mass and fluid analysis system that will allow an accurate assessment of your body composition. Any metabolic (medical) issues will be corrected to the best of our (or your primary physicians) ability. We will provide you with information on diet and activities that will become part of your new lifestyle. When appropriate we will use medications (thyroid, Welbutrin, Adipex etc.) to help with your weight loss. On a monthly basis we will review your progress and make adjustments for the following month. The goal is a slow and steady return to health and your ideal body composition. Prior to your first visit you will need to obtain a release from your physician for weight loss and exercise. In order to rule out any medical issues that would impair your efforts to lose weight we will review your recent blood work (CBC, electrolytes, glucose, cholesterol and thyroid, HbA1C). If you do not have this information please make an appointment with us (Dr. Bendell or Karen Manning, CNP) or your regular physician. We will also need a list of current medications and doses.

We will provide all the medical and spiritual support we can however ultimate success is up to you. Ninety percent of weight loss and maintenance is simply hard work and you are the only one who can do it. You **can** feel better, look better and live longer.

Diet:

In order to maintain a healthy diet you need to understand the contents of foods and how much of them you need. Lists of common foods and their calorie and fat contents can be easily found on the Internet. Learn how to read food labels. A basic guideline is that the more processed a food is the worse it is for you (i.e. higher fat and sugar). Examples would be lean beef vs. a hot dog or cheddar cheese vs. cheese whiz. Use a food diary to monitor and control what you eat and how much. It is much better to have several small meals throughout the day than one or two huge ones (yes, eating breakfast is essential to health and weight loss!). Many good programs exist to help with dieting. Weight Watchers is one of the best. Many helpful logs and food diaries exist on line but aware of fad diets and product traps. We will ask for your daily calorie intake at each weight clinic visit. Making good food choices has a huge impact on your calorie intake. For example, by choosing a regular hamburger instead of a large triple hamburger (once a week) you will reduce your annual calorie intake by **24,076 calories**. (Equivalent to 6.8 pounds in weight)! Home cooking and bagged lunches with fresh, simple produce is always best (and cheapest!). Weight loss and dieting doesn't mean eating less - just different.

Exercise

Like diet, exercise is essential to weight loss and health management. "Curves" offers an excellent circuit-training regime in a comfortable and supportive environment. Local gyms, fitness centers and personal trainers can also be excellent. If you plan to exercise from home write out a program and record your efforts. A buddy system is always best for both safety and honesty! Whatever you do you must feel yourself working (i.e. breathing heavy and increased heart rate) - chasing your kids and a hard day at work simply doesn't do it! Keep log books recording what you have done, how much and the daily total of calories burnt. As with food intake there are many excellent web sites that help your record keeping. Aim for at least 45 minutes of exercise 5 days a week.

Medications:

The first role of medications is to correct any metabolic disorders that create weight problems. This would be achieved during medical visits with us or your primary care physician. Examples of medical issues include anemia, hyper or hypothyroidism, polycystic ovarian syndrome, diabetes and adrenal disorders. Once medical issues have been dealt with we have many options for substances that may help you with weight loss. Medications range from simple vitamin supplements (i.e. B12 shots) through to appetite suppressants (i.e. Adipex). Examples of medications we have successfully used include antidepressants (Welbutrin), thyroid medication, hormones, anti-diabetic medications (i.e. Glucophage) and food absorption blockers. Part of your assessment and treatment may include the selection of one or more medicates that will help you achieve your weight loss and health goals. Note: Please be sure to tell us if you are not using contraception!!!!

At Each Visit We Will:

1. Take vital signs
2. Assess weight, body fat, body fluid
3. Record current medications
4. Record current diet (daily calories in) and exercise (daily calories out)
5. Discuss alterations in diet and exercise plan
6. Discuss alterations in medications
7. Provide a summary of your progress
8. Provide prescriptions or medications (if needed) and follow-up appointment

In order to accurately track your progress from month to month we must try to minimize other variables in your physical state. Please review the following list prior to each weight visit;

- Schedule visits at the same time of the day and month to avoid daily and monthly fluid fluctuations
- Wear clothing of similar weight to each visit
- No alcohol for 48hr before the test
- Avoid eating or drinking (especially caffeinated products) 4 hours before the test
- Empty your bladder 30 minutes before the test
- Avoid all diuretics for 7 days before the test (only if possible)

Tips for weight loss

Tip 1: Eat at least 5-9 servings of fruits and vegetables per day

Fruits and vegetables are packed with beneficial fibers, vitamins and antioxidants. They fill up your stomach fast so you feel full earlier. They are low in calories and help keep your calorie count low.

Tip 2: Do not skip meals

Eating small frequent meals helps balance your calorie intake throughout the day and keeps your blood sugar level balanced. Instead of eating 3 big meals, try 5-6 smaller meals throughout the day.

Tip 3: Exercise, period.

Most authorities recommend 45-60 minutes of physical activity a day. Also try adding weight-bearing exercises at least 2 times a week. This will help burn some of the unwanted calories.

Tip 4: Understand Food Claims and Labels

A product labeled with a fat-free claim does not mean that it is low in calories. Similarly a product labeled as low-sugar or low-carbohydrate does not mean it is low in fat or calories. Always read the nutrition label on the packaging.

Tip 5: Watch for the sugary drinks.

Calories in juices, pop, cream and sugar for your coffee or tea all add up. Opt for drinking at least 8 glasses of water/day. Along with providing hydration the water helps you to feel full (cold water helps to burn calories).

Tip 6: Fight back against a fat culture. We are programmed to “eat up” and “clean our plates” but the serving sizes and richness of our foods is out of control. Splitting meals can help. Another trick is to ask for your take out container and put away ½ of your meal prior to even starting to eat.

Web sites:

Sites for creating on-line diet and exercise diaries:

<http://www.calorieking.com/tools/>, <http://calorielab.com/news/2005/10/22/body-fat-measurement-in-a-nutshell/>, <http://calorielab.com/index.html>,
<http://www.dietorganizer.com/index.html>, <http://www.nutrawatch.com/>,
http://www.caloriesperhour.com/index_food.html

Other useful sites:

<http://fatnews.com/>, <http://healthyamericans.org/>, <http://www.caloriecounter.co.uk/index-health.asp>, <http://www.fhma.com/calories.htm>, <http://www.ntwrks.com/~mikev/chart1.html>,
<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/cgi-bin/nut>