

# Beaumont study proclaims very low cal diets work

Researchers at William Beaumont Hospital say "very low-calorie diets" do work, despite the yo-yo weight problems of national talk show host Oprah Winfrey.

"This study disproves the notion that people who lose weight on very-low-calorie diets put it all back on again," said Dr. Charles Lucas, director of Beaumont's Division of Preventive and Nutritional Medicine in Birmingham.

"VLCD therapy, combined with behavior modification, has produced large degrees of weight loss in moderate to very obese patients over the past 20 years," said Dr. Lucas. "But there have been few studies documenting the long-term effectiveness of a very-low-calorie diet."

Winfrey's much-publicized weight regain, after a very-low-calorie diet (VLCD), fed the viewpoint that people who lose weight on

## HEALTH

VLCD programs gain it all back again.

### Study published

The study by Beaumont researchers was published in the August edition of the International Journal of Obesity. The 3.3-year follow-up study of 118 patients who completed eight weeks of VLCD therapy found:

- 75 percent kept off an average of 43 pounds.
- 20 percent averaged 100 pounds of weight loss after three years.
- The total 118 patients achieved an average weight loss of

69 pounds during VLCD treatment and maintained a loss of 30 pounds in the follow-up study.

The Beaumont study is one of only seven published that have followed VLCD patients more than two years after weight loss and one of the largest samplings. All 118 were at least 40 pounds overweight by the Metropolitan Life tables.

Patients in the Beaumont study had a daily intake of 300-450 calories. The formula consisted of 45-70 grams of protein, 20-75 grams of carbohydrate, 1-2 grams of fat and no cholesterol.

Patients were seen weekly by a physician and encouraged to exercise and to keep daily food and exercise records. They attended group sessions led by a psychologist for training in behavior modification. As they approached their goal weight, patients entered a maintenance phase of the program where a low-fat food diet was slowly introduced. They also attended group meetings with a dietitian for instruction in low-fat food choices.

### Winners, losers

Those who exercised and used behavior modification had the most success in losing weight and keeping it off. Examples:

- Those who "fat-proofed" their homes, kept daily records and practiced assertiveness, problem-solving and other forms of behavior modification, lost twice as much weight, and regained half as much weight, as others.
- Exercisers had a greater overall percentage of weight loss than non-exercisers. Those who exercised more than 210 minutes per week

maintained a weight loss twice as great at follow-up as those who exercised less.

Patients who reported eating high-fat foods at least once a week regained more weight than others. The percentage of weight loss at follow-up was twice as great in those who said they did not eat cheese, butter, high-fat snacks and fried

foods.

- Those who reported eating dessert once a week regained 73 percent of their weight, compared to a 42-percent regain for those who refrained from dessert.

The percentage of regained weight did not differ significantly between men and women, said Dr. Lucas.

## Agency seeks parenting volunteers

Michigan State University's Cooperative Extension Service is looking for parenting volunteers to place in local homes. The Parent Partnership program will provide families with friendly advisers on all aspects of child-rearing.

Volunteers will receive 18 hours

of training in subjects ranging from nutrition to budgeting, then meet with a family for one or two hours per week for six months. The next training session begins Sept. 15. Further information is available from Sandy Cowell or Elaine Paradis at 858-0395.

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