

Triumph

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Grisa recently has started eating one solid meal. He continues to visit the center for weekly blood tests and monthly EKGs. He is working on changing his attitude toward food.

"Losing the weight is the smallest part of the challenge of keeping fit," he said. "It's changing all the little things in your life."

Now, instead of looking for a parking slot closest to the store, Grisa parks at the farthest spot and walks briskly to the store. He uses the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator. "There are lots of ways to manage 20- or 30-minute workouts every day," he said.

His self-discipline is paying off. "I feel terrific. I have more energy, sleep less and enjoy working."

Never too late

"I've been dodging the bypass surgery room for nine years," said Ben Diggs, 74, of Redford

Township. If Diggs maintains his current diet and exercise regimen, he may dodge surgery forever.

Diggs has a history of heart disease and diabetes. He suffered a heart attack in 1992 and has undergone several angioplasties, including the insertion of a stent. He has dieted before, but the weight just didn't stay off.

Thanks to his cardiologist, Diggs ended up participating in Healthy Solutions. The 13-week diet program offered by St. Joseph Mercy Health Stop at the Briarwood Mall in Ann Arbor supplies him with specially prepared shakes and entrees. The 25 pounds he has lost since April may not seem like a lot, but it has made a big difference.

Diggs used to take three nitroglycerin pills to make it through his daily three-mile walk. Not any more.

"I took one after one-fourth mile, one halfway through and another at about two-and-a-half miles. After I lost seven pounds, my pace picked up. I noticed I didn't have to take one of those nitroglycerin pills. After I lost about 20 pounds, I wasn't taking any nitroglycerin."

The 6-foot-9 Diggs now weighs 185. He longer takes diabetes or blood pressure medications. "My blood pressure was 107/62 this morning, and my blood sugar was 97," he said during a recent interview.

Diggs is now on a maintenance program. It's hard work, he says. "How many times I've stopped in an airport and grabbed a Cinnabon, I don't want to count."

Attitude change

Cox said few people undergo epiphanies like Shay's New Year's Eve revelation. "It's like quitting smoking. It's the constant trying until you have

enough skills, enough strength to do it. You can't just change your diet. Shay went inside and made some big changes."

Fortunately, Shay had the support of her husband, John, and daughter, Rita, 12. Non-judgmental support is an important component of weight loss, said Cox.

"John was always kind to me when I was big. Now he has a new wife," said Shay.

Rita said Shay no longer looks like the mother she used to have. "I remember I could never put my arms all the way around her," she said. "Then one day I could, and I was so happy."

Shay said she has probably lost 1,000 pounds over the years. However, this time her weight loss this time is permanent. "I've reprogrammed my brain. Food is no longer my whole life. It's part of my life. My life no longer revolves around food."



Before, after: Frank Grisa (above) topped the scales at 300 pounds before he sought help. He has shed almost 100 pounds (right) since November.

Programs offer support for your weight problem

■ Beaumont Weight Control Center in Birmingham offers a medically supervised program that uses a multidisciplinary approach, which can include consultation with a doctor, psychologist, exercise physiologist, registered dietitian and nurse practitioner.

■ Introductory sessions are offered at 7 p.m. the first Tuesday of each month; 1 p.m. every Wednesday; and at noon every other Saturday. Call the center (888) 899-4600 to register or for more information.

■ Health Solutions is a 13-week program that combines intensive lifestyle education and support with a nutritionally complete, "decision-free" diet that utilizes delicious shakes, puddings and microwavable entrees. One-hour orientation is free. A maintenance program is available after the 13-weeks. The program is \$20 per week for classes and additional charges for food and initial lab work. Call St. Joseph Mercy Health Stop at (734) 827-3777.

■ Weight Management is a 13-week program offered through a partnership between St. Mary Mercy Hospital and Health



STAFF PHOTO BY BRIAN MITCHELL
Lighter: Ben Diggs of Redford Twp. lost 25 pounds, but it made significant difference in his health.

Management Resources. It includes the option of a medically supervised program and a non-medically supervised program ("Healthy Solutions"), depending on the amount of

weight loss desired.

Both options use nutritionally complete weight-loss foods (shakes, bars and entrees). Lifestyle education classes focus on new ways of eating and building physical activity into your daily routine. Skill-building continues in an extensive Maintenance Program.

Call St. Mary Mercy at (734) 655-1783. Free orientation session from 4-5 p.m. Wednesday, March 21 and 28.

■ The Solution is a 12-week weight-control program offered at the Botsford Center for Health Improvement in Novi under the guidance of a certified nutritionist and mental health worker.

Program focuses on group discussion, specific journal writing, community outreach and continual practice of The Solution skills - Strong Nurturing, Effective Limits, Body Pride, Good Health, Balanced Eating and Mastery Living.

Classes are limited to 10-15 participants. The cost is \$250, with classroom supplies extra. A free The Solution retreat is held every 13th week on a Saturday. Call (248) 477-6100.

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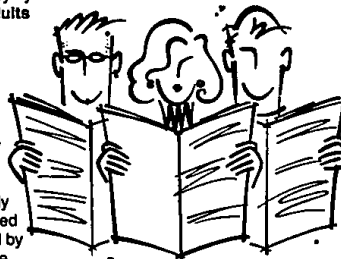
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