

Doctors Rip Weight-Losing Tricks

NEW YORK (AP)—True or false? You can melt away extra pounds by wearing special tight plastic blouses and slacks. You can buy an electrical device for effortless reducing that is a convenient, pleasant, comfortable and relaxing form of exercise resulting in substantial weight and girth reduction. There are pills that allow you to "lose 54 pounds of ugly, dangerous fat in only three short months" while eating all the spaghetti, malted milks and pizza you want. False is the answer to each of these questions, according to the American Society of Bariatrists—the association of physicians who specialize in weight reduction. Americans spend more than \$250 million each year for a fantastic array of easy weight reduction schemes such as these, say the bariatricians. *** IF OBESITY were merely the result of over-eating, treatment would be relatively simple, the doctors say. But there are several possible medical reasons for obesity, and each patient must be treated according to the reason for his obesity: 1) Environmental, or "mis-nutrition" due to the excessive availability of food; 2) physiological, which may be due to aging, to the onset of menopause, or the lack of exercise; 3) psychoneurotic, or emotional, obesity; 4) genetic, or metabolic, obesity such as may be related to diabetes; 5) hormonal obesity; and 6) iatro-

genic obesity, that which is caused by certain drugs, such as "the pill." Some of the most interesting reasons for obesity, bariatricians say, are psychological. Dr. Jean Mayer of the Department of Nutrition at Harvard agrees. He says: "Many of the obese are effectively, indeed compulsively, habituated to excessive food intake or weight gain." For this reason, in the most severe cases, psychiatric therapy must accompany a weight reduction program. Dr. Grace A. Goldsmith, Professor of Medicine at Tulane University School of Medicine, states, "Too little attention has been given to the many facets of therapy: motivation, psychic and emotional aspects, familial and environmental problems and individualization of treatment with close supervision. Therapeutic success can be obtained only if the patient strongly desires to lose weight, and if the physician is willing to devote the necessary time to the patient's problems." *** IT SELDOM does any good for the physician to accuse the patient of gluttony and treat him by trying to frighten and reform him. Tolerance, sympathy and understanding on the part of the physician and the willingness of the physician to spend time with the patient can mean the difference between success and failure. Because a good patient-physician relationship is so important to effective reducing, bariatricians concentrate on dealing with many different aspects of obesity. They endeavor to guide patients in a safe, sensible weight-reduction plan that takes into account the psychological as well as physical factors involved. Members of the American Society of Bariatrists are specialists who have agreed to highly restrictive procedures in their medical practice. One aim of the Society is to educate people against common misconceptions about weight reduction. It cannot be overemphasized that overweight is a medical problem, capable of control by medical means, not by self-administered crash diets, fad foods and magic pills. According to Dr. Norman C. Jolliffe of the New York City Department of Health, "At least 90 per cent of all the people who lose weight on a diet proceed to gain it right back, and usually they gain more than they have lost."

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