

# Serious dieting demands lifestyle change



RANDY BORST/Staff photographer

Psychiatrist Keith Levick calls food a nurturing, positive element of life.

By Lisa Simon  
staff writer

"We're the only animal that eats when we're not hungry," said Keith Levick, psychiatrist. "Dieting causes us to binge."

## Problem-solving clinics set for small business

The Wayne State University Small Business Development Center will offer a series of problem-solving clinics for businessmen at the Southfield and Sterling Heights College of Lifelong Learning Centers.

Clinics will be held in Southfield during September and in Sterling Heights during October. A clinic on "Business Loan Applications" will be offered in Southfield Sept. 10 and Sterling Heights Oct. 15.

A clinic on "The Importance of a Business Plan" will meet Sept. 11 in Southfield and Oct. 16 in Sterling Heights. "A Business at Home" will be discussed in Southfield Sept. 12 and in Sterling Heights Oct. 17.

"Protecting and Managing Your In-

Medical Weight Management, the name of a pilot weight-loss program conducted at Jensen Associates, on Orchard Lake and Eleven Mile roads in Farmington Hills, involves Levick, another psychiatrist, Ron Braun, two internal medicine physicians, an ex-

ercises physiologist and a nutritionist. Both Levick and Braun were previously obese and have been professionally involved in several other weight-loss programs.

"This is a lifestyle change, it's not dieting, persons are developing a new lifestyle," Levick said. Changing learned behavior toward eating is the prime obstacle.

The nine women who are in their 10th week of this "comprehensive, professional program" have been guided through a "cognitive-behavioral approach" program, according to Levick. Thus far, the average pounds lost per person, has been 30 to 40. The women in the control group are primarily middle-aged.

ONE OUT OF every five Americans is overweight, and 85 percent of people who lose weight gain their weight back, Levick said. "The program is for the person who has tried many many programs and failed."

"This (the program) is not designed for the person who wants to lose 10 to 15 pounds," Levick stressed. To qualify a person must be at least 25-30 percent overweight. "It is a program for the obese."

The program, which was created at Cleveland's Sinal Hospital in 1972, involves a liquid diet supplement, Optifast, that is ingested five times a day. Drinking Optifast five times each day equals 450 calories per day, Levick said. Persons involved in the program eat nothing else for several months. Optifast comes in a chocolate, vanilla, strawberry or broth form and is available by prescription only. "Most people like the chocolate," Levick said.

Optifast is only one portion of the overall program. Participants must first undergo a complete physical examination with blood and other laboratory tests. After the initial exam, a physical is required once a week until the program has been completed.

"Families reinforce people to eat," Levick said. Levick and Braun also conduct family support nights, where family members receive explanations concerning what changes the obese individual faces as a result of the program.

"A HUSBAND who eats pizza in his wife's face," when she's only drinking Optifast, can be disruptive to the goals of the program, according to Levick. These occasions are crucial to the family support groups and "help (families) understand what an individual is going through."

After three months or 60 pounds, participants "are gradually reintroduced to food by the nutritionist," Levick said.

"Nutrition and exercise is crucial to proper weight management," Levick stressed. Throughout the program, the individual is constantly evaluated by an exercise physiologist for weight and body fat content. A person may lose body weight before they lose pounds, Levick explained.

The exercise physiologist "tailor-makes a proper exercise program for each individual," Levick said. "Psychologically, food is a substitute for psychological things you didn't get as a kid," Levick explained.

"If you're a good boy, you'll get a piece of cake," Levick said in reference to an example of how food is a learned positive and nurturing element.

"If YOU FEEL bad, you turn to food because of previous unfortunates," Levick said. Food is used to soothe an indi-

vidual's "stress, anxiety and tension," he added. "We turn to food to feel good."

"Dieting deprives us of the one thing that makes us feel good," Levick said. "You have to change the way you think and behave."

Participants range from persons who have been overweight their whole lives, to those who have gained their weight in different developmental stages, such as after they had children or the death of a spouse, Levick said.

Learned eating habits hinder these situations. "The last 10 years have shown a whole revamping of the traditional meat and potatoes kind of diet," Levick said. Further, traditionally, it has been more acceptable within society for men, as opposed to women, to be overweight.

Secondary problems can be physically and emotionally devastating, according to Levick. He explained that obese people have concerns about things that don't affect the general population. "Chairs, turnstiles and bathroom stalls" pose a host of anxieties, as do social areas like dating.

"IT'S A VICIOUS cycle," Levick said. The health hazards of being overweight are also detrimental. Hypertension and heart problems are the two worst problems facing unhealthy, overweight people.

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