

HEALTH News

Do New Year's diets really work?



DR. KEITH LEVICK

**TO YOUR HEALTH**

Wait! Before you start your New Year's Resolution about diet and exercise! Unfortunately, you are in the majority if you have returned to your old ways.

Before the guilt sets in, however, please realize most dieters fail to reach their goal.

For the first time in history, this country has more overweight people than thin people. Obesity has reached epidemic proportions. In a desperate search for a magic formula to melt away excess pounds, many fall prey to the "yo-yo" diet syndrome.

The typical dieter drifts from one program to another. They lose some weight only to regain what they lost and even more. Ninety-two percent of dieters regain their weight within two years.

Many diet programs continue to advocate outdated techniques that have never been effective. Chew your food like a gourmet; use smaller plates; eat half the amount of food, etc., are examples of the antiquated techniques still being taught.

Typically, weight loss programs teach in a "smorgasbord" style, failing to address individual differences.

The chance for long-term success is necessarily minimized. When fad diets and gimmicks are included in the mix, weight control success remains an elusive goal.

Weight depends on the balance between calories consumed and calories expended. Intake more than you output, and a weight gain results. That's it.

No "sleeping away" those ugly pounds. Balancing your caloric intake with your caloric expenditure is like balancing a checkbook. Exceed your limit and you will be overdrawn.

Once overdrawn (overeat) the

**In addition to poor nutritional knowledge, society has become conditioned to a sedentary lifestyle. Physical activity has declined 75 percent since the days of our great-grandparents.**

creative excuses begin: "I ate because I'm angry, sad, happy, anxious."

Or rationalizations regarding the numbers on the scale: "This scale is broken;" "It must be water retention." If that doesn't work, we lean to the right, to the left, take off jewelry, inhale, exhale or anything else to alter the reality of the scale's message.

With a basic understanding of calories and fats, however, you can learn to balance caloric intake and maintain desired weight.

The typical American lacks knowledge of fundamental nutrition.

Many people equate volume with calories. It is not necessarily the amount of food but rather the amount of fat content and calories within the food that matters.

An example: a 12-ounce steak and black coffee have more calories than a similar portion of broiled fish, salad with no-fat dressing, two baked potatoes with sour cream, two vegetables, a roll with margarine, two cups of coffee, and a cup of vanilla ice cream for dessert!

In addition to poor nutritional knowledge, society has become conditioned to a sedentary lifestyle.

Physical activity has declined 75 percent since the days of our great grand parents.

Consider the typical housewife in the early 1900s. In order to provide a family meal, she walked to town to purchase food and walk back home and prepared the meal. This was an all-day activity. Meanwhile, her farmer husband walked an average of 12 miles a day plowing the field.

Today, the homemaker drives to the market to purchase food and prepares it via microwave. The farmer drives his air conditioned tractor (while listening

to his favorite tunes) as his belly slowly expands. Oh yes, the advantages of modern conveniences.

To end the weight loss/gain rollercoaster, there are two crucial steps.

First, learn the caloric and fat content of different foods, and choose accordingly. Eat turkey sandwiches instead of corned beef, structure snacks and nibble on no-fat popcorn instead of peanuts. Be careful of no-fat pastries. No fat does not equal low calories.

Second, increase your level of physical activity. Take the stairs instead of elevators, park farther from the mall door, and decrease the amount of television. Without making exercise part of our everyday life, maintaining weight loss is virtually impossible.

Weight loss is a billion-dollar-a-year industry.

It can be very lucrative for the unscrupulous. Consequently, diet programs and claims constantly recur.

Long-term success must include changes in lifestyle and attitude.

A beginning step could be redefining the concept diet to mean: Developing Intelligent Eating Techniques.

By the way, for \$29.95, I will send you my easy, scientifically proven, fast, no exercise required, eat what you want, diet program! (wink, wink)

Dr. Levick is a health psychologist and the director of The Center For Childhood Weight Management in Farmington Hills. He can be contacted at (810) 855-5771 or e-mail questions or suggestions at [Klevick@aol.com](mailto:Klevick@aol.com).

Also, Dr. Levick will be speaking at CMI Health & Tennis Club in Southfield on Wednesday, March 5. To reserve a seat, call (810) 646-8990.

Beaumont Hospital offers child CPR classes

William Beaumont Hospital is offering a one-session course on basic infant/child CPR for parents and grandparents of infants and young children. Classes are \$20 and will be offered: Wednesday, March 19, 6:30-9:30 p.m. in classrooms J and K of William Beaumont Hospital, 44201 Dequindre,

Troy; Thursday, March 6, 13, 20 and 27, 6:30-9:30 p.m. in classrooms C and D of the Beaumont Rehabilitation Center, 746 Purdy, Birmingham; Monday, March 24, 6:30-9:30 p.m. in conference rooms A and B of the Beaumont Medical Building, 6900 Orchard Lake Road, West Bloomfield;

Monday, March 31, 6:30-9:30 p.m. in the first floor classroom of the Beaumont Medical Building, 6700 N. Rochester Road, Rochester Hills. Participants are certified by the American Heart Association after they successfully complete the course. To register, call 1 (800) 633-7377.

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In all tasks in life, your perception is your reality

TALK TO THE MIRROR



FLORINE MARK

The longer I live, the more I realize that how we choose to see things is often more important than what's actually there.

The following story illustrates this point perfectly.

There once were two men, both seriously ill, in the same small room of a hospital. The room only had one window. One of the men, as part of his treatment, was allowed to sit up in bed for an hour in the afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to the window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back.

Every afternoon, when the man next to window was propped up for his hour, he would pass the time by describing what he could see outside. The window apparently overlooked a park with a beautiful lake. Ducks and swans swam in the lake and children came to throw them bread and sail model boats. Young lovers walked hand-in-hand beneath the trees and there were flowers, stretches of grass and games of softball being played. Behind the trees was a wonderful view of the city's skyline.

The man on his back would listen to the other man describe all of this, enjoying every minute. He heard how a little boy nearly fell into the lake and how beautiful the girls looked in their summer dresses. His friend's descriptions brought the images to life and he could almost see what was happening outside.

Then one afternoon, the thought struck him: Why should the man next to the window have all the pleasure of

seeing what was going on? Why couldn't he see? He felt ashamed, but the more he tried not to think about it, the more he wanted to look out the window. One night, the other man died quietly in his sleep and the jealous man finally had his chance to experience all the beauty he thought was just outside.

As soon as it seemed appropriate, the man asked if he could be switched to the bed next to the window. So they moved him, tucked him in and made him quite comfortable. The minute they left, he propped himself up on one elbow, painfully and laboriously, and looked out the window.

It faced a blank wall!

I often say that the way in which we choose to see the world creates the world we see. My vision has always remained the same.

"To teach people the skills they need to be the best they can be. They achieve this physically by adopting a healthier lifestyle and mentally by gaining self-esteem and improving their outlook on life."

If you feel that good health has always been just out of reach, close your eyes for a moment and envision some positive changes you would like to make in your life. Wake up every morning, look in the mirror and tell yourself that you can achieve any goal you have set and then go for it!

Please submit your health and nutrition questions or suggestions for upcoming articles to: Talk to the Mirror, Weight Watchers Corporate Communications, P.O. Box 9072, Farmington Hills 48334-2974; or fax to (810) 553-7105.

Florine Mark is president and CEO of the Weight Watchers Group, Inc. based in Farmington Hills.



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