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Changing Diet Behaviors: the Good, the Bad and the Ugly

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HEALTH & WELLNESS

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Changing diet behaviors: The good, the bad and the ugly

By Robert Topp, RN, PhD

Pop Quiz

Q: What is the best way to lose weight and keep it off?

A: Don't diet!

The problem of excessive body weight is becoming a BIG problem. According to the most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control, more than 35 percent of adults are obese, with approximately another 35 percent considered overweight. This means seven out of 10 adults in the U.S. are carrying around an excessive amount of body weight primarily in the form of fat. This excessive body weight is related to almost every major chronic health problem including diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, arthritis, stroke and depression, resulting in an obese person spending on average \$1,429 more on health care per year than a normal weight individual. Excessive weight also reduces a person's lifespan by three to 10 years, and a majority of scientists in this area predict that obesity will result today's children having a shorter lifespan than their parents. More importantly, excessive weight makes completing activities of daily living more difficult and decreases the quality of life in later years.

This problem of excessive body weight is simply the result of the number of calories eaten being greater than the number of calories burned. Calories can be burned through physical activity and metabolic processes (metabolic rate). Solutions to address the problem of excessive body weight that do not address both of these factors are doomed to failure. Surgical interventions including liposuction, stomach banding, etc. that address neither

Health & Wellness
CREAM OF SPINACH SOUP
recipe in
Somethin' Good is
Always Cookin' on page 9.

calories eaten nor calories burned are initially very effective at resulting in weight loss, but nearly 100 percent of these individuals regain the weight they lost through the surgery. This is also the reason that reducing calories eaten, or dieting alone, rarely results in sustained weight loss. The human body has the incredible ability to adapt to a reduction in calories eaten by decreasing the number of calories burned in metabolic processes. This ability allowed our

ancestors to survive times of meager food availability but unfortunately this survival adaptation makes losing weight through calorie reduction alone (dieting) all but impossible. Thus, a sustained reduction in excessive body weight can only be achieved through a combination of reducing the number of calories being eaten and increasing the number of calories being burned through physical activity.

Achieving weight loss through a combination of reducing the number of calories eaten and increasing the number of calories burned is the subject of numerous popular and effective weight loss programs (Weight Watchers, Jenny Craig, Biggest Loser Diet, etc.). The challenge is once these programs are stopped the individual tends to fall back to their pre-program habits of eating more calories than they burn and they regain the weight they had lost. Research has shown 95 percent of those who lose weight by following weight loss program eventually gain it back within three years after they stop the program.

So, if weight loss programs and diets don't work what can be done to sustain weight loss and a normal body weight? The answer to this question is a

See **TOPP** on page B14

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“Memory is the medicine of mourning”

Continued from page 5 **OBEY**

Instead of fearing the pain of your memories of holidays past with your loved one, plan your family celebrations in ways that stimulate the healing memories.

For the time of gift-giving: ask each family member to write a memory of a holiday experience with the one who has died. Some of these might be humorous; some might be grateful. Provide time for sharing these memories as a gift to all the family, and to the person who died.

Most families take some pictures at holiday time. Go through your old family photographs and make a small collection of holiday pictures, especially ones showing your loved one. Spend a little family time after the holiday dinner passing these pictures around and talking about past celebrations.

Or, you might ask each person to bring to the holiday observance, or simply to describe, one gift that was given to them in the past by the one who is no longer present.

Your memories of your loved one are resources for grieving positively. Even though they may hurt now, in time they bring healing!

Because the holidays are saturated with



The 4th degree Knight of Columbus of Argyle, Darlington and Monroe recently held a dinner meeting at in New Glarus. The K.C.'s help us to live in unity, charity and patriotism.

memories of happier years, they offer a rare occasion to affirm, rather than to dread, healthy memories. This affirmation requires the courage to face your feelings, in order to grieve. Courage is being afraid, but doing it anyway!

“You are not lost, you continue in every hearty laugh, in every nice surprise and in every reassuring moment of my life!”

* * *

My thanks to Rainbow Hospice for allowing me to share this article with you.

Mary Obey is a parishioner at St. Thomas of Villanova Catholic Church, in Palatine, IL.

Changing diet behaviors

Continued from page 8 **TOPP**

change in lifestyle that includes adopting healthy food intake and increased physical activity patterns for the rest of your life. If you want to avoid excessive body weight for the rest of your life, then you have to adopt healthy eating patterns and increased physical activity for the rest of your life. Increased physical activity doesn't necessarily mean high intensity exercise like running a marathon, but rather any physical activity that requires movement. Below are a few easy lifestyle changes you can adopt that will contribute to healthy eating patterns and increased physical activity for the rest of your life.

1. Get MOVING! Do one minute more physical activity every day until you work up to 30-60 minutes. Any physical activity is better than no physical activity
2. Watch what you drink. For every beverage you consume try to drink an equivalent amount of pure water.
3. Eat more fruits & veggies. Start by adding one additional fruit and veggie per week and work toward four to six fruit or veggies per day.
4. Buy yourself some TV time with physical activity. Try to engage in equal durations of watching TV and doing physical activity.
5. Wait 20 minutes before adding a second helping of food.
6. Change the way you serve food including eight-inch dinner plates and not having the serving containers on the table.

Robert Topp, RN, PhD, is professor and associate dean for research at the College of Nursing, Marquette University



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DOWN & ACROSS PUZZLE on page 11

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