



March 2007

Be comfortable in your genes!

National Eating Disorders Awareness week is observed February 25 through March 3, 2007. Eating disorders are serious illnesses. Everyday, researchers are discovering more about the influence of genetics on eating disorders.

The message of this year's observance is that body size and shape are strongly influenced by biological factors – such as genetics.

Too often individuals struggle against their natural, genetically influenced size just to fit into that pair of "skinny jeans." Fighting your natural size and shape can lead to unhealthy dieting practices, poor body image, and sometimes eating disorders.

Cut the string on Yo-Yo dieting

You've been starving yourself for years. You've tried every diet book in the library. You've lost the same 10 pounds at least a dozen times. Those pounds always come back – and then some.

"Dieters face a vicious cycle of losing weight and putting it back on, again and again," says Evelyn Tribole, R.D., a nutrition counselor in Irving, Calif., and author of six books on nutrition.

The cycle is called the "yo-yo effect." It happens to almost everyone who tries to lose weight quickly by relying on an unnaturally low-calorie diet, sometimes using special menus or food supplements.

Yo-yo dieting just sets the stage for health problems. Up to 95 percent of dieters gain back their lost weight, plus a few pounds, within three years.

In addition, yo-yo dieting can cause physical harm. Yo-yo dieters face an increased risk for heart disease, possibly because of short-term rises in cholesterol levels.

Dieting also seems to slow the body's metabolism in the long term. To help you survive on fewer calories, the

metabolism adjusts and remains low even when you stop dieting. As a result, the more diets a person goes on in a lifetime, the more resistant to diets the body becomes.

Additional Resources

- Visit the National Eating Disorders Association Website at <http://www.edap.org>
- Learn about Bing Eating at the National Institutes of Health The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NDDK) at <http://win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/binge.htm>

Instead of looking for the latest miracle diet, think about weight control as a process that involves real changes. Make a commitment to a healthy life; to eating right and exercising regularly.

Break the dieting cycle by making some new rules about eating that you can stick with for a lifetime:

- Don't go for more than five waking hours without food.
- Allow yourself to enjoy eating; look forward to meals. Savor your food instead of feeling guilty about it.
- Stop eating when you're full. You don't have to clean your plate.
- Forego perfection. You won't ruin your diet by eating an occasional piece of pie. As long as it's occasional.
- Take the long view. Realize that your food intake and weight will go up and down from day to day.

Exercise: The 'E' Stands for 'Everyone'

Nearly everyone can find some form of physical activity that will work for them, regardless of age, weight, chronic or compromising illnesses, physical disabilities or other special conditions.

The biggest obstacle to exercise is often not our bodies but our minds. People with special physical conditions often believe that their problem prevents them from exercising or that exercising may worsen the situation. On the contrary, moderate exercise is often a prescription for many conditions.

Follow these guidelines and get started now.

No drastic change necessary

To get started on a simple exercise program, just examine your routine, find the activities that make your body work, and expand the amount of time spent doing them to 30 to 60 minutes.

Walk to the local grocery, wash the car, rake your neighbor's leaves with your own or take up bicycling. You'll be surprised at how many opportunities you have to get solid exercise right under your nose.

Ask your doctor

Your doctor can assess your overall health status and make recommendations for an appropriate fitness regimen or refer you to an exercise specialist for help.

For example, if you have rheumatoid arthritis, your doctor may recommend swimming in warm water, because the water's buoyancy reduces stress on the joints and the

warmth relieves joint pain. For the same reasons, swimming is also recommended for women in their last trimester of pregnancy.

For someone with diabetes, timing exercise with meals and medication schedules will help avoid drops in blood sugar during workouts.

Tips to remember

- Use clothing and equipment suited to your activity and condition. For example, people with diabetes should break in new shoes slowly to prevent blisters that could become ulcers.
- Drink plenty of water. Overheating is particularly dangerous for pregnant women, who shouldn't exercise in the heat.
- Exercise moderately to vigorously for 30 to 60 minutes most days of the week. You can break this into two or three shorter periods during the day.
- Monitor your heart rate. Subtract your age from 220 to find your maximum heart rate in beats per minute. Exercise at an intensity between 70 and 85 percent of that number.
- Know your body's warning signals that you've had enough: heart palpitations for the obese, for instance, or joint pain if you have arthritis.

Visit your Wellness/Fitness Center for a fitness assessment and information on an exercise program customized for you.

**A man too busy to take care of his health is like a mechanic
too busy to take care of his tools.**

- Spanish Proverb

Weight-control Pitfalls to watch out for

People often think that fat-free eating is virtually calorie-free eating. Not so. For example, many people make the mistake of increasing their overall calories when they cut back on fat-laden foods. In an effort to eat healthier, many people eat a large, fat-free frozen yogurt every day, and then they can't understand why they're not losing weight. Well, that's 500 extra calories a day, or about a pound a week.

The 'fat-free' food myth is just one of the many weight control pitfalls that can sabotage your efforts to maintain a healthy diet. Below are just a few others to watch out for.

Miracle diets

If you cut your normal food intake by more than 1,000 calories a day, your body will go into a starvation mode, ratcheting down your metabolism to conserve energy. You're also more likely to binge later. You'll actually lose weight faster by reducing calories moderately.

No gain in pain

The idea that exercise has to be laborious drudgery is flat wrong. Even small changes in a couch potato lifestyle -- like taking the stairs or spending extra time in the garden - - have a positive effect on health. And regular aerobic exercise like walking 30 minutes three to four times a week can lead to fitness. "

Sugar is sugar

Your body processes nearly all carbohydrates you eat, including white sugar and more complex, natural sugars

like honey, syrup, and molasses, into the same thing: glucose--which is a form the body's cells can use for energy.

You must read labels. Some popular foods that indicate they are "sugar free" are full of honey and molasses.

Pay attention to the beverages you drink

It's easy to guzzle more than you think because liquid calories -- from fruit and coffee drinks to beer and regular soda -- don't yield much satiety, meaning psychologically you don't feel like you've eaten.

Curb liquid calories by making everything you drink between meals low-calorie or calorie-free. Drink water, seltzer, regular coffee, tea, diet soda (sparingly), or diet vegetable juice. Also, make specialty coffee drinks a splurge rather than an everyday event.

Watch what you're doing when eating

Eating while you're doing something else, whether it's driving or answering e-mail, is a good way to inhale calories without realizing it because on-the-go calories can be dissatisfying.

Instead, schedule at least 20 minutes for eating without television and without reading, which also can be distracting. Your aim is to focus on your food and savor every bite.

Deskercise Corner: Hope for hips

Hip Flexion

Sitting in your office chair and keeping your knees bent, lift your left foot off the floor a few inches.. Hold 2 seconds and repeat other side.