

Teacher's guide for **You CAN lose Weight**

This is not a patient hand out.

Weight loss is a very difficult thing to do, especially if you are going about it in an “unnatural” way. Eating a very limited diet, restricting or skipping meals and ignoring hunger is counterproductive. Restrictive diets lead to overeating. The information in this hand out is based on the idea called intuitive eating. It emphasizes the whole concept of eating appropriately, eliminating overeating and avoiding a “restrictive” mentality to weight management. Along with these ideas is the fundamentally healthy eating approach, but the ideas of “good” and “bad” foods are not stressed. Becoming aware of when you are hungry and not overeating is a part of respecting your body and taking care of yourself. It is the ultimate self-management. The patient needs to become aware of his/her life practices that affect his/her weight. Much of the eating people do is NOT related to hunger. Non-hunger related eating can be a result of stressful life situations, boredom, anger, depression, feeling out of control, feeling isolated, eating to reward oneself, or just plain habits of eating in certain situations like in front of the television, or eating by the clock, instead of by your hunger cues.

Eating only when hungry requires a certain amount of attentiveness and reducing distractions. Also skipping meals habitually or NOT eating when hungry can contribute to overeating later. Having a FOOD LOG is a very important tool to assess when and where eating is taking place.

Stopping before you are full. There are 4 stages of hunger satiation:

1. hungry
2. not hungry
3. satisfied
4. full (overly)

The patient should practice” tuning in” to these stages. Eating past satisfied can be a habit.

Eat slowly. Each meal should take at least 20 minutes. Only in eating slowly can the message of being satisfied make it from the stomach to the brain before overeating takes place. Eating slowly also gives more time to enjoy the food.

Eat while at the table, not in the car or in front of the television. Eating at the table promotes normal weight in children as well as supports all of the above mentioned ideas about “tuning in” to the cues for hunger and satiety. It makes eating a more conscious act

Write down everything you eat or drink for 3 days. The FOOD LOG fulfills several functions:

1. It makes the patient more aware of what he/she is eating
2. It records the times and patterns of eating
3. It gives a record of what the patient eats for further counseling aimed at improving quality of diet.

4. It helps the patient to identify if emotions are involved in the decision to eat.
Teacher's guide to: You CAN lose weight- page 2

The second page is very important because it says that losing weight is not just what you eat or when or why, but it is part of a bigger health picture. Eating nutritiously is part of being healthy. Exercising is vital to everyone's health and dieting without exercising is not healthy because living without exercising is not healthy! Exercise promotes increased metabolism and supports muscle development which maintains the high basal metabolic rate. Trying to lose weight is really not the goal--- learning to be healthy IS the permanent goal. The habits we are working on are life long changes for the better. Weight loss can be discouraging when the body is viewed as "the enemy". Help your patient to see their body as a tool, a friend, and a gift that he/she is in charge of. Our patients are just like us—whole persons! So remember that weight loss is not a product, it's a process of learning to care for self and balance life. The goal is not pounds off, that is the side effect of the true goal: healthy living and better self-management in all areas of life.