

Letter to the Editor: The Pundit Speaks

By Randolph M. Howes, M.D., Ph.D.

September 8, 2019

“Smarter Ways to Lose Weight”

Countless weight-loss plans pushing diets, potions, and devices have been marketed to the overweight population. Still, only an estimated 1% to 3% of dieters end up losing weight and keeping it off. Do not fall for false advertising as regards pills, supplements, herbal drinks, patches, and creams. Remember, the Food and Drug Administration does not necessarily review these products for safety and effectiveness. The simple truth is that there is only one legitimate plan for weight loss: Decrease your calorie intake and increase your activity level. With weight loss, total calorie expenditure must exceed calorie consumption. At the expense of fat, many low-fat and reduced-fat foods contain high amounts of high-calorie sugar. Look at the labels to cut back on both fat and sugar. And, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) says there is nothing you can wear or apply externally that will lead to weight loss. Although there are prescribed medications to help patients lose weight, over-the-counter, ineffective, unlicensed weight loss pills abound. Weight loss requires more than exercise. A common saying is, "Abs are made in the kitchen." Please remember that exercise is usually followed by hunger. So, combine exercise with a healthy lifestyle. Slow weight loss can be sustainable but rapid weight loss will frequently “yo-yo.” A one to two pound a week loss is recommended. Pushing yourself until you collapse is unwise and so is harboring a feeling of guilt from slow loss of pounds. Do not confuse pain with progress and always exercise in a safe manner. Gyms and trainers are flooded with offers from manufacturers to pitch vitamins, shakes and exercise equipment. Do not be swayed by gym décor or an associated fancy café. Although eating a balanced vegan diet can result in weight loss, a vegan diet can also be unhealthy. Remember that there are loads of vegan junk foods, such as chips, candies, and chocolate. Slow and steady wins the race. Crash diets, which border on starvation, not only fail to result in long-term weight loss, but can also result in weight gain. The reason is that crash diets are hard to maintain. Many people think that being on a diet means denying yourself, so that you feel hungry all the time. But being hungry will make you irritable, resentful, and can set you up for failure. Successful weight loss involves making small changes that last a lifetime, and extreme amounts of exercise to shed unwanted pounds are untenable. Overweight people need to exceed the recommended 150 minutes of exercise per week.

In the America that I love, creating a caloric deficit through a healthy diet in combination with physical activity will give you the best long-term results. Sadly, there are no "quick-fixes."

Randolph M. Howes, M.D., Ph.D.

Surgeon/Scientist/Patient Advocate

27439 Highway 441, Kentwood, LA 70444

985-229-6955 Home | 985-229-3760 – Fax | 985-514-0578 – Cell

rhowesmd@hughes.net | www.iwillfindthecure.org

