



## Every Dieter's Dilemma:

# 5 Tips

## for Keeping the Weight Off

Nearly one-fourth of all Wisconsinites are now obese. And many of us – obese or not – have just resolved to lose weight in 2009. But in truth, the real trick is *keeping* the weight off. **Studies show more than 90% of people who lose weight will gain it back.**

"People think it's inevitable they'll gain the weight back," says **Janet Droessler, MD, from Dean's Comprehensive Weight Management Program (CWMP)**. "It's possible, however, to break that pattern."

Dr. Droessler and **CWMP Program Manager JoDeen Hettenbach** offer five proven strategies for effectively maintaining a healthier weight for a lifetime. The strategies are taken from the countless success stories at Dean's Comprehensive Weight Management Program and from the National Weight Control Registry, a group that tracks behaviors of 5000 people who have lost at least 30 pounds and kept it off for at least one year (the average member has lost 66 pounds and kept it off 5 1/2 years).

**Write it Down!** Record keeping is helpful for bringing awareness of "mindless" eating and other food habits. It can also be very motivating as you track progress. "It's easy to eat hundreds of calories without being aware of it," Dr. Droessler explains. "Also, if you weigh yourself every six months, your weight will creep up. If you weigh yourself weekly, you can take action before your situation becomes overwhelming."

**Find Your Motivation.** Are you ready to change the patterns that created your current weight? "People truly think they're 'fixed' when the weight goes away," explains Hettenbach. "When we reach our goal, we resume our 'normal lifestyle.' But that 'normal lifestyle' results in your *high* weight. If you're not ready to change how you shop, how you cook, how you eat, and how you relate to food, your diet will be just another temporary fix." The providers at Dean's CWMP can help assess your readiness. Patients are encouraged to do a cost/benefit analysis. What is it costing you – financially, physically, and emotionally – to be overweight? On the flip side, what benefits could you realize by reaching a healthier weight? Everyone's motivation will be different.

**An Apple a Day Keeps the Pounds Away.** Eat 5-10 servings of fruits and vegetables every day. "Not all calories are created equal," shares Dr. Droessler. "Fruits and vegetables

are low in calories, packed with nutrients and a good source of fiber." Hettenbach takes it a step further. "Eat food that is real or natural," she urges. "**Today, most of the food we eat falls off a conveyor belt instead of a tree.**"

**Couch Potato Does NOT Count as a Vegetable.** "Move as much as possible," encourages Hettenbach. Ideally, that means 30-60 minutes of aerobic exercise at least five times a week. If this is new to your routine, you might find it helpful to start slowly and *schedule* time for exercise. Then keep your appointment just like any other.



**Fill Your Toolbox to Do the Job Right.** Weight management is a skill that is learned and requires a totally different skill set than weight loss. It takes practice and diligence. When it comes to follow-through, a great support system can make all the difference. "Patients do better in groups," Dr. Droessler explains. "They share ideas about what works and are accountable to one another." Hettenbach agrees. "It's hard work, and there are lots of challenges," she confirms. "But patients love being here because it's so charged and upbeat."

**Attitude Adjustment**  
Both Dr. Droessler and JoDeen Hettenbach agree on the importance of treating weight management like any other chronic health issue. "Patients do a 12-week program, for example, and the effects associated with being overweight may go away," Hettenbach explains, "but they still have the environmental and genetic factors that didn't go away."

"A good analogy is diabetes," Dr. Droessler states. "A person with diabetes can have his or her blood sugars completely controlled, but if the person stops following the treatment plan, the blood sugar levels will go back up because the underlying condition still exists."

You don't have to do it alone. "At the Comprehensive Weight Management Program, we have a variety of options so people can find something that works for their personality and lifestyle," describes Hettenbach. "About 20% of our patients are interested in surgery. The other 80% can choose from other programs, including a Very Low Calorie Diet to help jumpstart weight loss or the LEARN behavior modification program and more. One size does not fit all, not in people and not in programs for people."

The average patient coming into the CWMP has lost and regained 30+ pounds five or more times. "We help people identify the patterns they are stuck in and help them get unstuck. It's an absolute *honor* to help people on their path to a healthier weight."

Dr. Droessler agrees. "The cool thing about my job is taking people off their blood pressure and diabetes medications. I get to see patients actually *prevent* diabetes."

Hettenbach beams, "Great work is happening here."

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