

The *Piano Lesson* Diet

How come so many well-intentioned diets fail? Why is weight loss maintenance sometimes so difficult? Why have so many of us lost the same 20 pounds 20 times? And what can we do differently in 2007 to break the cycle?

One explanation is that we tend to be goal-oriented, a trait that can sabotage the most well-intentioned weight maintenance program. I hear this every day: "I need to see results or I won't be motivated to continue." My interpretation of this request: people come to see me with a weight problem that has persisted for 30 years, and want to see results within 2 weeks, or they'll lose the motivation to continue. If you look at it in this light, the "goal-oriented" desire to take the weight off quickly sabotages the weight loss and maintenance effort.

Let me explain. As a goal-oriented culture, we place value on completing tasks. For example, a person sets a goal to complete a home improvement project by a certain deadline. Once the project is completed, there is a sense of pride in completing the project, and it is time to move on to something else.

Unfortunately, this mindset simply doesn't work for a weight problem. Take the following as an example: "I want to lose 50 pounds by Christmas." It seems like a good goal, doesn't it? The problem is two-fold. First, what if the goal isn't reached? What if the body simply isn't able to lose that amount of weight in the time specified? Then, the brain gets a "failure" message. "Why should I work so hard if I can't even reach my goal? I might as well eat what I want, and not work on it because I'll never be successful anyway." Even if the individual had lost 30 pounds, resolved the high cholesterol and improved the blood pressure, the failure message is still overwhelming.

Second, let's look at the other scenario. What if the goal is reached? 50 pounds lost by Christmas! Now, the brain gets the message: "Goal reached. Time to move on to something else." What often happens when we see that our weight goal is reached is we naively assume that the project has been completed. Time to move on to other things, other projects. Unfortunately, this can be the beginning of a failure to maintain weight loss, because the project of "50 pounds by Christmas" is no longer being worked on.

NEW WEIGHT LOSS DRUGS FOR 2007

Several new prescription medications are in the works. Although none has received approval, here are a few to watch for:

Rimonabant (Acomplia / Zimulti) has been filed by Sanofi-Aventis for the treatment of obesity. It works by blocking the cannabinoid receptors, and appears to be helpful for not only weight loss, but smoking cessation and both treatment and prevention of diabetes as well. In the *Rio-North America* trial, 3045 people were studied. At 1 year, patients lost an average of 19 pounds each. They also improved their HDL (good) cholesterol by 16 percent, and lowered their levels of insulin resistance. At 2 years, patients still maintained an average of 16 pounds of weight loss. Side effects include slightly higher incidences of depression, anxiety, irritability, and nausea. There is reasonably high likelihood that the FDA will approve this medication in 2007.

Orexigen is studying a variety of drug combinations to combat obesity: **Contrave** is a combination of Naltrexone SR and Bupropion SR. Naltrexone has long been used to combat opiate and alcohol addiction, while Bupropion (Wellbutrin) is a commonly prescribed anti-depressant and smoking cessation aid. Preliminary 36 week data shows an average weight loss of 8 to 9%. **Excalia** is a combination of Zonisamide SR and Bupropion SR. Zonisamide is a commonly used medication for seizures. At 24 weeks, patients lost an average of 9.2%.

Compellis Pharmaceuticals has been issued an initial patent for a nasal spray that aims to treat obesity by blocking the senses of smell and taste.

As obesity research continues, scientists are starting to better understand the different pathways leading to weight gain or weight loss. The above represent several novel ideas, although until further research is completed, should not be used for most patients. As new treatments become approved, we will keep our web site up to date and keep you informed with our e-Newsletter. *If you haven't subscribed, be sure to visit www.ClinicalNutritionCenter.com and sign up.*

In the mean time, Phentermine and Tenuate continue to be affordable, safe, and effective options for our patients at CNC. For some patients, there are other options, too. These include: changing from medications that cause weight gain, such as certain anti-depressants and diabetes medications, to medications that don't, using Bupropion SR alone to combat emotional eating (off-label use), using Topomax to combat medication-induced increases in appetite (off-label use), Xenical to block fat absorption, Metformin to treat insulin resistance, and more. Schedule an appointment with Dr. Lazarus if you'd like to review *your* options.

Ethan Lazarus, M.D.

Instead, focus on the *benefits* of weight loss *to you*. A lower number on the scale is not really a tangible benefit - it is just a number. How is your energy? Your sleep? Are you enjoying new clothing? Do you like your new size? Your looks? How is your blood pressure doing? How about your cholesterol? Now that your weight is lower, are you engaging in activities that you weren't able to do before? How about your risk level for diabetes and heart disease? Are your odds improved for living a long productive life and being around for your grandchildren? **These benefits are far more tangible. Let them provide motivation for the long-term rather than a number on the scale.** Use the scale simply as a guide.

Suppose we take a different approach. What if we were to approach weight loss and weight maintenance like learning to play a new musical instrument? Suppose you decide that it's time to learn the piano. You spend \$20,000 on a brand new Steinway, have it set up in your living room, and buy a book on learning to play the piano. You realize it's hard work, you aren't motivated to practice, and within a few weeks you

have a beautiful piano that isn't being played. Alternatively, suppose you sign up for a class at your local community college. Eight weeks later, you can now play "3 Blind Mice," but that's it. You have only learned one piece and did not receive any personalized coaching. As the class ends, you again have a beautiful piano that isn't being played.

OK, so how does one learn the piano? Well, I'd suggest you'd be better off buying a \$100 used upright piano off *Craig's List*, and signing up with a good piano teacher for weekly lessons. The piano teacher's role is two-fold. First, they need to have the knowledge to teach you to read, interpret, and play music. Second and of equal importance, they need to make it fun! Let's face it - sitting at the piano and not knowing what you are doing is frustrating. Unless you can turn frustrating into fun, you'll never continue or make progress. A good piano teacher is successful because she makes learning the piano fun! As you learn both how and what to practice, you actually start to enjoy it.

So how does all of this apply to diets and weight loss / weight maintenance? Well, going on a diet is not fun, and nobody is quite sure

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which the "right" diet is. At a recent trip to the book store, I saw titles from "Eat right 4 your blood type" and "The fast-track One-Day Detox Diet" to "The 3-hour diet" and "6-Day Body Makeover." Do any of these self-help diet books really contain useful information for the person serious about maintaining a healthy weight? Have they worked for you in the past? Further, just the term "diet" has lots of negative connotations - a short-term intervention designed to lose weight. But then what? Back to the old habits? Back to the old weight?

Just like learning the piano, you can try to control your weight by reading a book, but the results are the same as with learning piano from a book. You could sign up for classes or for a group - odds are you'll do a little better than you did with the book, but still not achieve the results you desire. Instead, *seek the assistance of a trained professional*. A registered dietitian is such a great asset. She can give you the tools to be successful AND make it fun while keeping you accountable. With our piano lesson analogy, in time, you'll look forward to your piano lessons because you want to impress the teacher with your progress. The same is true for the weight problem: you'll actually look forward to working on it. *The accountability for most people is the missing link.*

As with learning a new instrument, the frequency of contact is the most important determinant of success (see the next article in this newsletter as well). You wouldn't sign up for piano lessons once a quarter or once a month - this amount of interaction will not be sufficient to make any progress. Once you are an accomplished pianist, you may cut back to once or twice a month for coaching. The same holds true for working on your weight. Most people will have successful weight loss with weekly interactions, and most can successfully maintain weight loss with monthly accountability.

In summary, weight loss and weight maintenance are life-long projects. Try not to be so "goal-oriented" and instead focus on the tangible health and other benefits you experience as your weight improves. These are

HAVE YOU SEEN OUR TESTIMONIALS?

In late 2006, CNC began collecting testimonials from our patients. We hear and see these incredible stories every day, but now you can see for yourself. Our testimonials are from real people, and are completely voluntary. These are patients on the same programs as everybody else.

Check them out in our waiting room, or at www.ClinicalNutritionCenter.com. Many of our patients are using this as a reward for achieving their weight loss goals, a sign of success. If you've had success with CNC and would like to share your story, we are happy to offer a \$20 gift certificate for anybody wishing to submit a testimonial. You'll find all the information on the web site.

Finally, we want to thank you for all of your referrals to us in 2006. For 2007, we continue to offer a \$50 gift certificate for each new patient you refer to us.

Thank You!

more motivating than a number on a scale. And work with somebody to whom you can be accountable, somebody with the knowledge and tools to help you be successful, somebody who can make your pursuit of a healthy weight *fun*.

Screen Time vs. Face Time for Weight Loss

Too many dieters declare victory before their enemy truly is vanquished. In the search for more effective interventions to successfully maintain weight loss over the long term, Rena Wing, PhD, of Brown University Medical School designed a study called the Study to Prevent Regain (*STOP Regain*) to determine what was most effective.

Investigators divided 314 people into 3 groups: face-to-face contact, contact over the internet, or a quarterly newsletter about healthy eating. *The results showed face-to-face time the most valuable tool to prevent weight regain.* Participants were followed for 18 months.

Investigators drew the following conclusions based on their data:

- 1) **Only the face-to-face format reduced the amount of weight regained.**
- 2) The internet program *did not* significantly reduce the amount

of weight regained compared to the control group.

3) Attendance at meetings, which investigators expected to be higher in the Internet group because of the greater convenience, **was in fact superior in the face-to-face group.**

CNC has always offered face-to-face visits as our #1 recommendation for weight loss and weight loss maintenance. If you have struggled with weight loss maintenance in the past, use 2007 to get back on track! This is a life-long goal. Most important: don't give up!

*Wing RR et al., A self-regulation program for maintenance of weight loss, *N Engl J Med*, 1006; 355:1563.

Staff News

Congratulations to Stephanie Muckey on the birth of her son Sam on August 22nd, 2006.

CNC Welcomes Heather Thomas. A Physician Assistant with over 10 years experience, she is extending medical provider coverage to include Mondays and 7:00 AM appointment times.

CNC Welcomes Susan Ellis. A Registered Dietitian with over 10 years experience, she has been with us since October.

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NEWS FLASH:
New Medications for Weight Loss

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