

Weight Matters



Success! Norm Wigington

At one point, Norm Wigington weighed more than 400 pounds and saw his future as an endless series of medical problems. His older brother was diagnosed with diabetes, and Wigington figured he wasn't far behind.

After careful consideration, he decided to have weight loss surgery to try to regain the quality of life he'd lost through excessive weight gain. In February of 2004, Wigington underwent gastric bypass surgery at the Methodist Weight Management Center. He lost more than 140 pounds, and almost three years later, he has kept the weight off.

Now, the number of medications Wigington takes has decreased, his blood pressure is right on target, and he describes his cholesterol as "invisible." At 55, he has avoided all the health problems he once thought were headed his way.

Wigington is also a part of the new Methodist Bariatric Advisory Council, a group set up through Methodist's Weight Management Center to advise and encourage people who have undergone weight loss surgery to lead active lives.

"Encouragement is very important, and you need somebody to say, 'Hey, you can do this,'" Wigington said. "I just want to encourage people. Success is for everyone, we just have to find out how."

For information about the Methodist Bariatric Advisory, contact the Weight Management Center at 832-667-LOSE (5673).

Walk the Walk

One of the easiest weight loss exercises to start is walking. Most of us already know how to do it — it was one of the first exercises we ever learned. While we learned to walk as babies, we learn to avoid walking as adults.

Look closely at babies learning to walk. Tiny arms flail. Legs buckle and hesitate. They fall frequently. But when they finally get their momentum, their faces register surprise, shock, fear and joy. Like baby birds taking flight, they find freedom.

Walking can mean freedom for adults, too. Swing your arms, move your legs, look at the scenery and think deeply about things. Walking for just 30 minutes a day can make you stronger and less prone to illness and disease. Walking briskly an hour a day will help you burn calories, lose unwanted pounds and maintain a healthier quality of life.

The calories you burn depend on many factors, such as your gender, weight, metabolism and exercise intensity. On average, a person weighing 180 pounds could expect to burn about 580 calories an hour by walking at a brisk pace, according to the American Council on Exercise. That's about one and half cups of your favorite flavor of ice cream.

Here is your list of supplies: comfortable, well-cushioned walking shoes; lightweight, sweat-resistant clothing; and a water bottle to stay hydrated. Check with your doctor before starting any exercise program. If possible, find a walking buddy. And write down your goals and progress — it helps. All you have to do is take the first step.



free

FREE Information Sessions

To learn more about the Methodist Weight Management Center, sign up to attend a FREE information session. For more information or to register, please call (832) 667-LOSE or visit www.methodistweightmanagement.com.

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Methodist Weight Management Center is the only approved weight loss center in the Houston area to use New Direction® products.

Replace Emotional Eating with 'Food for Thought'

How many times do you eat when you're not really hungry?

When we put food in our mouths to satisfy a feeling other than hunger, we practice emotional eating — filling our mouths and stomachs with food to satisfy a hunger that is far from physical.

Most overeating is caused by emotional hunger. Overeating driven by stress, anger, sadness, fear, loneliness or one of the many negative feelings that a human soul can experience, can lead to obesity and a host of other health problems.

From birth, humans are conditioned to relate food with comfort. Depending on family and environment, this

conditioning can lead to dangerous lifelong eating habits.

Why is it called “comfort food”? Because that giant slab of fudge or super-sized box of salty, greasy fries eases pain and makes a soul feel better. But, it doesn't take long before the comfort is replaced with guilt from gorging.

Realizing that emotional

eating brings only temporary relief is the first step in working out of a downward spiral. Here are five practical steps to keep emotional eating under control.

- **Write your way out of danger.** Recording everything you eat, the time of day and the reason for the food is an exercise in self-awareness. Choose a regular week and commit to writing down everything you eat and drink. The more you know about your own eating habits, the better armed you are to battle the bad ones.
- **Practice replacement.** The next time you feel stress or negative emotions and reach for food, stop yourself. Put on comfortable shoes and head out the door for a walk, a shuffle — any kind of movement. Exercise can suppress physical hunger and make you feel better about yourself and about life.
- **Relish sleep.** Strive to get the recommended eight hours of sleep necessary for a healthy, well-balanced body. Nothing stirs up negative emotions like lack of rest.
- **Turn your ordinary, planned meals into a celebration.** In your effort to eat nutritionally-sound, balanced meals at the same time each day, break up the routine with some flair. Try using your nicest china. Fill fancy, chilled wine glasses with water — put some celebration into the ordinary, and work on planning and enjoying healthful meals. This effort leaves less time for emotional eating and makes mealtimes more fun.
- **Give yourself a break.** If you mess up and stuff yourself with fast food after an argument with someone you love, don't repeat the cycle with self-punishment. Forgive yourself and move on. If you eat right most of the time, an occasional relapse is only temporary.



think.
eat.
enjoy.



Patricia Collette, MS, RD, LD Methodist Weight Management Center Clinical Dietitian Specialist

Each time a patient successfully loses weight and improves his or her quality of life, Patricia Collette celebrates.

“You see people get excited about life, and it has a ripple effect,” she said. “They teach their children or significant others or their friends. The success really doesn't end with their experience.”

In the Methodist Weight Management Center's Medical Weight Management Program, Collette works one-on-one with patients to help them identify their biggest challenges to eating healthy and the most important behavioral changes they need to make. She helps them assess the overall life changes they must focus on to lose weight and live healthier lives. Collette works closely with program counselors to combine self-discovery and awareness with nutrition education.

The long-term relationships Collette builds with patients — unusual in a hospital setting — gets them through the liquid protein portion of their diets and on to eating solid food again. Something as simple as changing a few food choices can significantly improve patients' lives.

“This is hard work for our patients but we are here to make it easier for them. In the end, they really end up learning a lot about themselves and how small changes can really make a difference.,” said Collette. “Losing weight is not an event, it is a process.”