

With Halloween and Thanksgiving behind us, bring on the Christmas season! October marks the beginning of our unhealthy choices and overeating. You don't have to wait until the New Year to make a commitment to eat better and exercise regularly. Start now, and make it a lifestyle! And you can still enjoy your favorite foods during the holidays (in moderation) without the extra weight gain.

Your weight is a balancing act, and the amount of calories you intake play a huge role. To lose weight, you have to burn more calories than you take in. It's that simple! There are two ways to do this:

- 1) Decrease the amount of calories you intake through food and beverages.
- 2) Increase the calories burned through physical activity.

Once you understand how the equation works, you are ready to search for a plan or schedule that works best for you and then set goals to achieve it! When selecting a weight management program, make sure to include your physician, family, and friends for support.

Tired of all the failed latest and greatest fad diets? The key is making permanent changes in your diet and exercise habits. Ask yourself the following questions when contemplating weight loss programs:

- 1) Does it include various foods from all of the major food groups?
- 2) Does it include food that you LIKE, and would enjoy eating for longer than a few weeks/months?
- 3) Does it fit your daily schedule and budget?
- 4) Is regular exercise part of the plan?
- 5) How effective is it? And is it safe?

The program should be directed toward slow and steady weight loss. It needs to teach weight maintenance after desired weight loss. *In general*, a women's diet should contain 1,000 to 1,200 calories a day while a man's diet should contain 1,200 to 1,600 calories a day. The rate of weight loss should be 1 to 2 pounds a week. This is a safe and effective way of keeping the weight off.

The other part of the equation is regular physical activity. Although people focus on diet when they are trying to lose weight, being active is also an essential component of a weight-loss AND management program. So, exercise is not only important to lose weight, but also to maintain it! When you're active, your body uses energy (calories) to work, helping to burn the calories you take in. Daily house or yard duties are forms of physical activity, but exercise, on the other hand, is a structured and repetitive form of physical activity that you should be incorporating into your weekly schedule. Keep in mind that you may need more physical activity to lose weight.

You may get hung up on the words --- diet and exercise, but don't. Diet simply means eating healthy, lower calorie meals; Exercise means being more active than you currently are. And as you might imagine, we can help. At our Stone Oak Facility, we not only have a weight management program but we also offer an independent gym program to people who are looking to increase their physical activity level. So don't hesitate to give our facility a call if you have any questions about these great programs!

Remember, you can still enjoy this wonderful time of the year, just make sure you make healthy choices and stay active. You may just need to work harder to burn off those holiday desserts!

<http://www.webmd.com/diet/guide/choosing-weight-loss-program>

<http://www.mayoclinic/health/weight-loss>