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## **DIET AND WEIGHT LOSS – NATURALLY AND SIMPLY**

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The desire to lose weight is a pressing concern for most people. In most instances, body weight can be controlled naturally. Sometimes there are internal medical (endocrine) factors involved, such as a low thyroid condition, which needs to be reviewed by the patient's physician.

For most normal weight-loss issues, it is a question of excess dietary intake and lack of exercise, factors which are prevalent in our fast-paced society. The problem of "eat less, exercise more" is simple, but still difficult to follow. It is a fact that most diets do not work in the long term.

While traditional Chinese medicine can help with weight loss, the program is most effective if the patient makes lifestyle changes. These changes should be made gradually and incorporated daily into one's lifestyle. In this manner, weight loss becomes permanent, not subject to the usual "ups and downs" typically encountered. The following tips may be helpful to follow: Use as many as you think you may need.

- Do not eat dinner later than 7 p.m. in the evening. The digestive functions are less active after this time and are not able to most efficiently digest meals.
- Reduce dairy (damp-producing) foods.
- Reduce oily foods, especially deep-fried foods.
- Start exercising; begin with 10 minutes per day and work up to 45 minutes per day.
- Do not restrict protein intake.

- Maintain body metabolism like a “bright fire.” It is easier to add a small log to a burning fire than it is to try to add a big log to a fire that has almost gone out. The weak fire has insufficient energy to burn the log, which then remains as one big piece. So, don’t skip meals and don’t allow yourself to go hungry. If needed, have small snacks of “bulky,” fibrous foods that have little calories, such as celery, carrots, fruits, etc.
- Maintain a diet diary. This may show eating habits tied to stress or certain behaviors. Once you know your eating habits, you can modify them more easily.
- When eating, try to eat bulky, fibrous items first. This way, you’ll fill up on foods which have fewer calories and feel less inclined to eat larger servings of more high-caloric food. So—eat your veggies and salad first.
- Use a smaller plate. Psychologically, we’re taught to finish our whole plate. Using a smaller plate allows you to cover the plate with less food.
- Eat until you’re 75 percent full. Many of us try to eat until we reach the “breaking point,” especially at buffet restaurants. In many cases, food becomes something we use to reward ourselves for a multitude of reasons, rather than just providing nutrition.
- Eat more natural foods. These are readily processed by the body and are generally healthy for you. Depending upon artificial and processed foods may make you feel hungrier and unsatisfied.
- One simple way to try to limit calorie think of intake is to follow the maxim: Eat like a king at breakfast. Eat like a prince at lunch. Eat like a pauper at dinner.

Remember, the issue of weight is simple, yet there are many contributing factors which can make weight loss difficult. The patient’s desire to incorporate simple lifestyle changes is most important to affect a long-lasting and permanent solution to find optimal body weight

Mr. McConville is a licensed acupuncturist with offices in Poway and Ramona. Since 1996, he has provided relief to patients with a variety of health complaints. He operates a family practice, treating pain and gynecological syndromes, internal medicine, asthma/allergies and pediatrics. If you would like to learn more about the benefits of acupuncture, please contact Kelly McConville at 858-254-4781.