Weight Maintenance: What No One Talks About!

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As many are aware, obesity has been on the rise in America and around the world. This rise in obesity has also led to an increase in obesity-related research and various solutions to help lower its prevalence. These days it is almost impossible to watch TV, read a magazine, or surf the web without being flooded with weight-loss tips and tricks for how to keep weight off. In this article we will discuss weight maintenance (WM) and what to consider if WM is a priority for you.

Weight maintenance: it seems like a straight-forward task. Just don’t gain or lose weight, right? Seems simple, yet so many people struggle with this endeavor. This seemingly simple act can be easily complicated once we factor in all of our daily to-dos and stressors, priorities that can take our minds off of WM. Work, family, friends, and day-to-day chores are generally considered to be priorities. In order to be successful at WM, one must also make this task a priority rather than an afterthought. Easy to say, but hard to do.

This article takes a different approach to WM by focusing on areas that are not frequently talked about: sleep and accountability. Both of these topics play a part in what we eat and our physical activity levels, yet they are often ignored by the fad diets and health “gurus”.

Sleep. Though it is not a guarantee that less sleep will lead to weight gain, it does appear that lack of sleep can influence how a person eats, what a person eats, and how much they exercise, which overall make WM harder. Thus, one of the first steps to fixing the obesity epidemic may be as simple as getting the recommended eight hours of sleep per night.

Accountability. It’s easy to say that you want to eat healthy, exercise, and overall lead a healthier life; however, implementing the necessary steps and holding yourself accountable can present challenges. Without accountability, people are more likely to slip back into old habits when things get hard.

Those who are successful at WM typically have ways of self-monitoring to help themselves stay on track. Individuals often use scales or the waist band of their pants to monitor weight changes. Additional “tools” used for accountability are friends, family, and peers. The key is to not go into weight loss or WM alone. Having people to cheer you on, check in on your progress, and join you on your journey is going to help motivate you to keep going and keep setting new goals.

This article does not intend to state that eating healthy and exercising regularly are not important steps in the WM process. What you eat and how much you move are huge factors in getting to and maintaining a healthy weight, but if you don’t have a solid foundation that includes good sleep habits and a strong support system, your journey to a healthy weight is going to be much harder.

A popular quote by Benjamin Franklin states that, “If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail.”

Being aware of the steps that need to be taken and the challenges ahead are the first steps. Below is a list of ten steps/ideas that can help you in your WM journey. Overall, the most important step is simply to have a plan.

10 Steps to Help You Achieve a Healthy Weight
1. Plan your day around food. Know what you are going to eat to avoid eating fast food as a last resort.
2. Grocery shop regularly. Keep your home stocked with healthy options.
3. Pack healthy snacks.
4. Schedule your workouts. Know what days of the week you are going, what time, and what you are going to do. Have a plan!
5. Tell people what you are doing and ask them to hold you accountable.
6. Find a partner, someone to share in your journey.
7. Allow flexibility in your diet for “fun” foods. Severely restricting your diet can lead to bingeing on unhealthy food.
8. Get adequate sleep.
9. Drink more water. This can help you avoid unnecessary cravings and replace beverages such as soda that are high in sugar and calories.
10. Start small. Don’t make a lot of changes all at once; try small tweaks such as cutting out soda or going on long walks to ease yourself into your new routine. This will help you avoid burn-out.

References:
Tobacco Cessation Program

Program Eligibility: Open to all TRICARE beneficiaries.

Please call JBSA-FSH Army Health Promotion at 210.916.7646 for class schedules and to enroll.