

Health Matters

A Newsletter from WOMEN'S HEALTH & SUPPORT SERVICES

Fall 2009

THERAPEUTIC EXERCISE • NUTRITION COUNSELING • FITNESS TRAINING • WELLNESS COACHING

Hello from Jody...

The past two years have been tremendous in promoting the importance of exercise and physical activity. In 2007 The American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association published physical activity and public health recommendations for older adults. This was followed by the *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* publication issued by the Department of Health and Human Services. The purpose...to encourage all adults to engage in physical activity and avoid an inactive lifestyle, and to affirm that regular physical activity reduces the risk of many adverse health outcomes.

This issue of **Health Matters** will summarize these guidelines for you. The feature article, *Why is it so Hard to Lose Weight*, provides insight as to why it's so difficult to take off excess pounds even when you think you are doing all the right things.

In addition to Fitness Assessments, exercise training, and the Change Your Mind Change Your Body® workshop, I am now offering weekly nutrition guidance via the internet (no appointment necessary!). For details, please email me at JodyBMiller@hotmail.com or call 301-299-6586.

Yours in good health,

Jody

Why is it so hard to lose weight?

Generally speaking, it is true that if we consume more food (calories) than our body can use we gain weight, and if we consume less calories and/or burn extra calories via exercise above what we need, we will lose weight. There are, however, a few factors that may work against every best intention.

Hormonal

As estrogen production and circulation decline during the perimenopausal transition for women, there is often an increase in body weight and a redistribution of fat specifically targeted to the abdomen. Women may notice weight gain in their stomach rather than hips and thighs, more similar to the pattern of male weight gain.

Stress

Stress can negatively impact the body and bring into play a complex system of hormones, enzymes and neurotransmitters which can influence weight loss. One of the main culprits is cortisol which is a corticosteroid hormone produced by the adrenal glands. During periods of chronic stress, cortisol production increases which triggers fat to be relocated from circulation and storage depots to the deep internal abdominal area. Elevated cortisol levels are also associated with high sugar and fat cravings and consumption.

Nutrition

Two scenarios may be applicable here – food choices and/or portion sizes.

Learning the true nutritional value of the foods that we choose and knowing what portions are appropriate for our personal needs are crucial to losing weight.

Exercise

Understanding the appropriate and effective types of exercise for our individual needs is essential for weight loss. More is not necessarily better.

Sleep

It is believed that the body's ability to metabolize sugar lowers approximately 30% when sleep is deprived. This may be caused by hormonal changes, specifically a lowered hunger-suppressing leptin along with an elevated appetite-boosting ghrelin. The end result is feeling hungry, overeating and ultimately weight gain.

Take-home message...

Optimal self care includes getting adequate sleep, keeping stress to a minimum, exercising effectively and truly knowing the value of the foods that you are consuming. These strategies, along with patience and self compassion, will support your efforts towards weight loss and better health.

GOING GREEN!



In an effort to do my part for the environment and save a few trees, *Health Matters* will soon be available online. If you would prefer to receive your next copy via email, please let me know at JodyBMiller@hotmail.com.

WOMEN'S HEALTH & SUPPORT SERVICES

THERAPEUTIC EXERCISE • NUTRITION COUNSELING • FITNESS TRAINING • WELLNESS COACHING

7810 Heatherton Lane • Potomac, Maryland 20854
301-299-6586

Group now forming for

CHANGE YOUR MIND,
CHANGE YOUR BODY:
Emotional Wellness & Weight Loss®

The next 12-week workshop begins on
Monday October 6th

Mondays 1:30 - 3:00 pm
October 6th - December 21st

This innovative and comprehensive program addresses the key areas to long term weight loss success – exercise, nutrition, and well-being – in a dynamic group format. Space is limited to 8.

Please register by September 18th by calling Jody Miller at 301-299-6586 or visit the website at **ChangeYourMindChangeYourBody.net**.

*The American College of Sports Medicine and American Heart Association Guidelines recommend that the intensity and duration of physical activity should be low at the outset for older adults who are highly deconditioned, functionally limited, or have chronic conditions that affect their ability to perform physical tasks. A tailored and conservative approach may be necessary, and only as tolerated so as to avoid being sedentary.

For Substantial Health Benefits: 150 minutes (2 1/2 hours) of aerobic exercise or 60 minutes (1 hour) of vigorous-intensity aerobic exercise each week	For Additional or Extensive Health Benefits: Increase the above to 300 minutes (5 hours) of moderate exercise or 150 minutes (2 1/2 hours) of vigorous exercise each week	For Weight Loss and Weight Maintenance: More than 150-300 minutes (2 1/2 - 5 hours) a week of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise
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In other words...

Healthy Adults under age 65:	moderate intense cardio 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week or vigorous intense cardio 20 minutes a day, 3 days a week	and	8-10 strength training exercises, 8-12 repetitions of each 2 times/week	and	8-10 strength training exercises, 10-15 repetitions of each 2-3 times/week	and	perform balance exercises and have a physical activity plan
Adults over age 65 or Adults 50-64 with chronic conditions:	moderate intense aerobic exercise 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week or vigorous intense aerobic exercise 20 minutes a day, 3 days a week						

At first glance these guidelines may be daunting, especially to those who are inactive. But they are a valuable framework with which to develop your exercise plan. Most important to keep in mind is that a little exercise is better than none at all. Start with what you can do* and build from there. If you are already physically active, this is a great way to evaluate your current plan and adjust if necessary.

Physical Activity and Public Health Guidelines Summary