

3 STEPS FORWARD, 2 STEPS BACK Healthy approach to weight loss works, dietitians say

[Mitchell Willetts | Enid News & Eagle](#) | Feb 17, 2019

ENID, Okla. — When Oklahomans were asked what they perceive as the No. 1 health issue facing their communities, the reply the majority of the time was obesity, according to a 2016 Integris health survey. Obesity ranked higher in priority than heart disease, diabetes, and substance abuse.

The state of Oklahoma has the third-highest adult obesity rate nationally and fifth-highest for adolescents, according to data from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Obesity is a problem that has been discussed at length, but the rates continue to rise, regardless.

The Fix

Experts know the fix, but it's not always an easy sell. "No one really wants to hear our method," said Linda Yauk, with Integris Bass Baptist Health Center. Yauk is a registered dietitian, a certified diabetes educator and a certified health and wellness coach who has worked at Bass for 20 years.



Patricia Stevenson, Integris volunteer; Lisa Bland-Selix, Senior Life Network program coordinator; and Linda Yauk, Integris certified health and wellness coach, talk about the misunderstood health benefits of certain foods.

Many weight-loss fads have come and gone, but the advice she has to offer still stands, she said, because it works. The problem is it takes work to make the experts' method work.

"Everybody wants a quick fix," she said. "They want a simple solution to a very complex problem."

'Aim for progress'

Weight loss is diet, it's exercise, it's trading long-established habits for newer, healthier ones, she said. Often it's three steps forward and two back.

"We try to get people to aim for progress, not perfection," she said, but people often have unrealistic expectations about how much weight they should be losing and how fast.

Rapid weight loss strategies typically aren't sustainable and will put a lot of stress on a body.

Deirdre Postier, a dietitian at St. Mary's Regional Medical Center, echoes Yauk's advice.

"Never go for any fad diet that doesn't give you the nutrients that your body needs," Postier said. "Cutting out an entire food group is never a good idea."

The healthy way

"One thing we dietitians really, really push is that we want people to become healthier and lose weight slowly," Yauk said.

"A five percent weight loss can improve blood pressure, blood sugars ... it takes a large amount of weight off of your joints, and a 10 percent loss has great cardiac benefits," she said.

To achieve better health, Yauk recommends a minimum 150 minutes of moderate activity per week. When it comes to diet, it's less about cutting certain foods out as it is allowing more types of foods in, she said, adding that variety and moderation are key.

"My motto is to eat a little of everything and not a lot of anything," Yauk said.

Postier also says to never skip meals. It might seem like a shortcut, but more often it's a setback. Skipping meals can slow down a person's metabolism, meaning their bodies will burn calories slower. Also, self-control is tough to maintain on an empty stomach.

"It makes you hungrier for that next meal, and you just can't stuff food in your mouth fast enough because you're so hungry from not eating," Postier said.

Dropping weight

St. Mary's works through local physician referrals to help with nutrition needs. The medical center also offers rehab fitness programs for cardiac care patients and employees, Postier said.

Integris Bass has programs and resources available like Fitclub, LifeSteps, and Senior Life group exercise classes. Fitclub is a free 45-minute workout class, complete with instructor, at 5:45 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday at Integris Bass Pavilion.

LifeSteps® is an upcoming program at Bass Pavilion, Yauk said, which features 16 steps to improving health, weight, nutrition, and stress. LifeSteps is expected to launch in early fall, she said.

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