

**Family Living Focus**

by  
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All of the successful weight loss programs include food diaries, a record of what you eat each day that lets you see where you might make simple changes that would reduce the calories that you eat. It might be as simple as substituting sweetened drinks such as soda or iced tea with water or the diet version.

Many of us were more active when our children were young. Lifting toddlers and picking up their toys, walking to the park and coaching Little League are all activities that expend energy. As children grow up, we may drive them to more of their activities. When they move out, we have less household chores and may spend more time watching television, reading or using the computer.

Unless we stay physically active over the years, our body composition changes to include more fat and less muscle.

Muscle uses more energy than fat so our energy expenditure decreases.

It sounds like nature is working against us. In some ways, it is. Our current society is also trying to sabotage our efforts to resist weight gain. Fast food restaurants have supersized their

meals, other restaurants have increased portions, soda and sweetened drinks are sold in larger bottles, and food is readily available for most people. The computer has invaded all segments of our lives, from video games to e-mail. We also find it difficult to walk to activities because of distance or safety reasons.

It comes down to you taking control of your weight. As the Volkswagen ad says, "There are passengers and drivers. Drivers wanted."

March is National Nutrition Month and the American Dietetics Association has chosen this year's slogan "Food and Fitness — build a healthy life style."

The food guide pyramid is the best gauge of whether your food choices are appropriate. Look at the recommended foods and serving sizes. Most of us need to add fruits and vegetables to our diet and remove some fatty foods. Unless you add a lot of butter or salad dressing to fruits and vegetables, they are low in calories.

Check servings sizes. A serving of green salad is 1 cup, 1/2 cup of cooked vegetables. Foods with

lots of fiber fill you up. Chose an apple instead of juice.

Unless you have a physical job, most of us need to include some form of exercise into our day. Again you need to be a driver and take control. The benefits of exercise on our bones, blood sugar and cholesterol levels and even mental capacity have been proven over and over again. Even if you have ailments that prohibit certain movements, there are exercise programs in which you can participate. For most of us, a 1/2 hour walk 3-4 times a week will be beneficial. Even more will reap added health benefits.

Physical activity and an awareness of our food consumption are essential components in preventing continuing weight gain. They may even result in weight loss if you decide to get serious about taking control. And if the car slips backwards occasionally, don't worry about it. You are the driver, put it into drive, and you'll be back on the road to holding down your weight.

**Holding Down Your Weight**  
Most of us have gained some weight over the years. Some statistics show that the average person gains about a pound a year after age 30. Some have gained significant weight around events such as pregnancy, quitting smoking, or loss of a family member. Any way we look at it, we now weigh more than we did in our early twenties.

The most recent weight and dietary survey of the U.S. population (NHANES II) found that more than half of the adults are overweight, and the average child is five pounds heavier than 10 years earlier!

Not surprisingly, the incidence of Type II diabetes, which is

strongly linked to obesity has also risen. Other health risks that increase with obesity include hypertension and related cardiac disease, asthma, some cancers and arthritic diseases.

So why are we not trying harder to control our weight?

None of these chronic conditions or diseases will increase our quality of life in the future.

Weight maintenance comes down to a simple formula of energy (food) consumed equaling that being expended (physical activity and basal metabolism). Most of us don't know how many calories we eat or how many calories we burn in activity but could find out by consulting a registered dietitian or gym with trained staff.

**Unscented: What Does It Mean?**

MONTOURSVILLE (Lycoming Co.) — Some people assume that unscented personal-care products won't cause allergic reactions. But some products labeled as "unscented" do contain fragrances that can trigger allergies in some people. Such products may contain fragrances that mask the smells of other ingredients. Hair spray in its natural state has a relatively unpleasant odor. So fragrance is added to make it "scent-neutral" and that is labeled "unscented."

Ingredients other than fragrances can cause one type of al-

lergic reaction, skin rash. So if you've had problems in the past from using personal care products, search for one that doesn't cause a rash. To test a new one, place a small amount on a gauze bandage and stick it on some unexposed skin for two days. If a rash develops underneath the gauze, avoid that product.

Some people are susceptible to coughs, other respiratory irritation, or asthma attacks when exposed to strong smells. Those people may be better off with unscented rather than scented products.

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