

Weighing In: June 2012

The Power of Choice

This has been a month of "I just can't keep doing this!" "I miss my sweets." "I think I'll go to another program that lets you eat sweets." "It's just so hard for me and it's been like that since Christmas." We have spent a great deal of time trying to keep people positive. From the time people hit their plateaus to their cheat weeks or cheat weekends, it has been an ongoing battle.

Many patients have asked me "Why do you continue to make me strive to stay positive?" The answer is that I have seen the remarkable outcomes from too many patients who follow the program to the letter. One of my patients, Debra, lost her weight and has kept it off for over four years. There is a reason that people return to their old habits. It is called the power of addiction.

As much as we talk about addiction, few of us realize the power it has over us. If you ask the people who have drifted away from us and then come back, many of them will say "If I just would've stayed in maintenance."

The idea is to reach the goal that you have set for yourself. This is based on choice. You choose what you should do. Should you eat it? If you do, then you are making an excuse and saying "I guess it doesn't matter now." That's the biggest lie you have ever told yourself. I have a patient here who I'll call John. John has a PhD from a prominent university. He teaches on the college level. John has written books and research articles and has been a very well-paid speaker. However, he cannot conquer his addiction to carbohydrates and sugar. He is the **King** of excuses.

John will tell us he was out of town and the only thing available to him was pasta. He said he didn't want to embarrass the people who had taken him out to eat. When I ask him if there was anything else on the menu, he will grin and say "well yes." John made the choice not to follow the program. So if there's anything you have learned from the Weigh Station, it's that it's about **your choice**. Nothing more can deter you than your own choice. You choose what you put in your mouth. Dr. Dums doesn't do it for you and neither do I or the staff. If I could, I would but I can't watch all of you.

No one wants you to succeed more than the staff at The Weigh Station. We value you. "We feel your pain," as Bill Clinton says. Just as John has made multiple excuses for the last three years, he has made some inroads as well. He came to the Weigh Station at 440 pounds and now weighs under 300. It's now just a matter of moving him past 297 pounds and that has been the struggle. John will admit that he cheats quite frequently and yet he knows it is the thing that is holding him back. Is it going to take some catastrophic event to make him

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realize this? Will he have to develop heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, degenerative joint disease or something else to wake him up to the catastrophe that is lurking in the shadows?

I continue to encourage John and I believe he's going to finally stick to the program. We had a come to Jesus meeting this week. He is always very polite and thankful of the encouragement that we give him as well as the discipline we hand out also. John has seen how much better he feels with his weight loss and his inches disappearing. So what makes a college educated professor repeat the patterns that he knows are causing his obesity. It is the power of addiction and the excuse of that addiction. For many years in the emergency department, I had a patient who I will call Tyrone. He was a very nice, quiet man who had a very bad drug habit. Tyrone was not mean or violent and I enjoyed his company, but he always had an excuse for why he needed Lortab. As many times as he had gone to rehab, he still convinced himself that he needed pain medicine for his bad back. Tyrone's repeated MRIs and CT scans to orthopedic consults and neurosurgical consults were all negative. However, the power of the addiction to Lortab was more than he could bear! He was always looking for an excuse to get more pain medication. Tyrone died about five years ago and as hard as it was for me to bear, I could never reach him. I so desperately wanted him to succeed in beating his addiction, but he always gave in. Each of you has a decision to make. The decision is to continue toward your goal and succeed as many of you have or keep relapsing back to where you were before.

In Roanoke this week, I saw a young lady who I'll call Beverly. Beverly has been in the program for two and a half years and she has lost more than 162 pounds. Over Christmas break, she decided to explore the joys of chocolate cake, brownies, ice cream, and homemade apple pie even though she felt bad about gaining 32 pounds. Now she has decided that she's going back to one of the programs that allow you to eat like that. This will be her 15th trip back to that same program that didn't work for her before. Beverly has also decided that she wants to get pregnant. She still needs to lose another 100 pounds, but she has decided to leave our program, returning to the one that has never worked for her before. All of this is just so she can eat chocolate cake and try to get pregnant. Beverly's convoluted thinking is

she will be able to keep her weight off, eat chocolate cake and brownies and still get pregnant. Can you see the power that addiction has over this woman? The Bible says "CHOOSE for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." The author, Wayne Dyer, stated "Be miserable. Or motivate yourself. Whatever has to be done, it's always your choice!" Chuck Swindle said "The remarkable thing is, we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day."

Now look what God says in *Deuteronomy 30:19-20*. "I call heaven and earth to record **this day** against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore **choose life**, that both thou and thy seed may live: 20 That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that **thou mayest dwell in the land** which the LORD sware [or promised] unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

The choice is now yours. We will do everything we can to help you. Please guard your hearts and your mouth and make the right choices for that will make all the difference in the outcome.

Blessings to all,

Chuck Shaffer M.D.

Healthy Eating In the Summer Time:

Summer brings an array of garden produce to enjoy in Virginia; okra, field peas, squash, kale, broccoli, strawberries and apples are just some fresh foods to look forward to. With so much variety, one may become overwhelmed with how to incorporate these foods into healthy meals. Not to worry, here are some great ideas!

Indian Infused Okra: Use two tablespoons organic butter or coconut oil, one medium onion (chopped), one pound sliced fresh okra, one-half teaspoon of the following: ground cumin, ground ginger, ground coriander and one-fourth teaspoon salt and pepper. Melt the butter or oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until tender. Stir in the okra and season with above spices. Cook and stir for a few minutes, then turn down the heat to medium low and cover the pan. Cook for 20 minutes stirring occasionally until okra is tender. (Makes 4 servings)

Kale Chips: Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Rinse kale leaves and pat dry. Spread the leaves on a cookie sheet and drizzle one to two tablespoons of olive oil over the leaves. Sprinkle with sea salt. Roast in the oven for 15-20 minutes or until leaves are crisp. Enjoy.

Spaghetti Squash Stew: Use one medium spaghetti squash, one diced zucchini, one diced yellow summer squash, two bell peppers (diced), 16 ounces lean ground meat (turkey, chicken or beef), six cups of low sodium broth and one-half tablespoon Italian seasoning. Cut the spaghetti squash in half and remove inner pulp and seeds. Place the squash face down in microwave safe dish with approximately one-half cup of water and microwave on high for ten minutes. Meanwhile, prep veggies by rinsing and dicing, set aside. Remove squash with pot holders from microwave and scrape out squash into large pot using a fork. Add diced veggies to pot as well as broth. Add seasoning. Place on medium heat and cover. Meanwhile, coat a pan with non-stick cooking spray and brown the meat. Once the meat is finished, the soup should be ready to go. Reduce heat to low or turn off and serve. Measure out three ounces of protein to top off the soup. (Makes 4 servings)

Healthy "baked" Apples: Slice an apple into six pieces and microwave for about 30 seconds until apple is soft and warm. Sprinkle one packet of Stevia and one tablespoon cinnamon on top. Enjoy!

Strawberry and Spinach Salad: Use four cups of spinach (rinsed and torn into bite-size pieces), two cups of sliced strawberries, one-half cup olive oil, one-fourth cup white wine vinegar, one-fourth cup Stevia and one-fourth teaspoon paprika. In a large bowl, toss together the spinach and strawberries. In a medium bowl, whisk together the oil, vinegar, Stevia and paprika. Serve dressing on side. (Makes 4 servings)

If you find that you are left with an abundance of produce in your garden at the end of the summer and are afraid it will go to waste, don't despair! There are several ways to preserve your summer produce to enjoy throughout the year.

Blanching is a great way to ensure that you are preserving your produce. Blanching kills the enzymes in vegetables, which prevents the enzymes from continuing to break down the food once frozen. To blanch, simply place **fresh** vegetables into boiling water for a couple of minutes (not long enough to fully cook them). This will help maintain a crisp fresh flavor when you want to use them later.

The best produce to blanch includes turnips, green beans, broccoli, beets, cauliflower, spinach and summer squash. There are just a few exceptions, which don't require blanching: onions, peppers, and herbs.

Each vegetable has a different boiling time. For a chart with the blanch time for specific vegetables please visit this link: <http://www.ochef.com/617.htm>. While the vegetables are boiling make sure you have a bowl of ice water ready. When the vegetables are finished blanching, they will need to go into the water for the same amount of time that they were in the boiling water. After this, pat the produce dry and it is ready for freezing.

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Although fruits do not need to be blanched, they will often stick together when frozen. The best way to avoid this is to spread the fresh fruit out on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper and freeze it. Once frozen, simply remove it from the parchment paper and place in a freezer bag and then immediately put it back in the freezer.

If you wish to can your produce, there are several things you need to know to ensure that your food is safe. If you are canning low acid foods like vegetables you must use a pressure canner to avoid harmful bacteria from growing in your product. Make sure to use fresh, young tender vegetables for canning. It is also important to vent pressure canners ten minutes before pressurizing to get rid of any trapped air. There are several different canning methods but the hot pack method is recommended for all low acid foods. For more information on canning vegetables go to:

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/foodnut/09348.html>

Fruit and pickles can be canned without pressure canners because they have a higher acid content. For more information on canning fruits go to: <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/pdf/5343.pdf>

Sharing The Journey:

Sharing the Journey is a support group where you can get together with people in situations similar to yours, talk about problems you may have had in the past, help others overcome their obstacles or maybe just vent your frustrations. We want you to know that you are not alone in your struggles and EVERYONE is invited to attend!

Linda Snead will be directing these meetings and you can read more about her on our website at www.weighstation.net.

Sharing the Journey meetings are held Thursday nights from 7:00pm-8:00pm. The first and third Thursdays at the Christiansburg Weigh Station.

Recipe of the month:

Indian Infused Okra:

Ingredients:

2 tbsp organic butter or coconut oil

1 medium onion

1 lb fresh okra

1/2 tsp ground cumin

1/2 tsp ground ginger

1/2 tsp ground coriander

1/4 tsp salt and pepper each



Directions: Melt the butter or oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until tender. Stir in the okra and season with above spices. Cook and stir for a few minutes, then turn down the heat to medium low and cover the pan. Cook for 20 minutes stirring occasionally until okra is tender. (Makes 4 servings)

- Did you miss our cooking class? No worries, visit The Weigh Station's youtube page to view all our cooking classes online! <http://www.youtube.com/user/TheWeighStationTV>
- More recipes can be found on our website at: www.weighstation.net/recipes

NEW: Body Fit Fitness Center Opening in June!

Located in the old Depot consignment shop space next to The Weigh Station in Christiansburg

Class Descriptions:

Zumba: Dance your way into fitness with fun and exciting Latin moves and rhythms. For beginners through advanced. The party starts here!

Healthy Backs: Designed for anyone suffering from back pain, discomfort or stiffness. Low impact stretches and core exercises designed to strengthen the back and ease pain and stiffness. For those with back issues.

Tone and Sculpt: Benefit from improved muscle tone and bone density through low impact weigh bearing moves and bodyweight exercises. Beginner to Intermediate.

Cardio Mix: A full body cardio workout set to your favorite tunes! Our instructors keep the class fresh with a mix of cardio moves from step training to kickboxing with some strength and conditioning moves to top it off. Beginner to Advanced.

Core Strength: Using specialized techniques, this class is designed to get your “Power House” in order! Work on your abs, back and everything in between to created your best core strength ever! Beginner to Advanced.

Core Fusion: A combo of balance & core strength exercises fused together to strengthen the entire body (focus is on upper body on Tuesday and lower body on Thursday). Beginner to Advanced.

Low Impact Cardio: Designed for torching calories using low impact moves. It will strengthen your heart and lungs while minimizing movements that could injure joints. Beginner to Intermediate.

Pilates Mix: Practice flowing mind, body and flexibility exercises using Pilates, Yoga and core exercise techniques in this class designed for all fitness levels.

Tentative Class Schedule *subject to change:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7:00 AM - 7:30 AM		Low Impact Cardio		Low Impact Cardio		
7:30 AM - 8:00 AM		Pilates Mix		Pilates Mix		
8:00 AM - 8:45 AM	Zumba		Zumba		Zumba	Low Impact Cardio
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM						Zumba
10:30 AM - 11:15 AM	Healthy Backs	Core Fusion	Healthy Backs	Core Fusion	Healthy Backs	Tone & Sculpt
11:30 AM - 12:15 PM	Tone & Sculpt		Tone & Sculpt		Tone & Sculpt	
12:30 PM - 1:15 PM	Core Strength		Core Strength		Core Strength	
3:00 PM - 3:45 PM	Cardio Mix		Cardio Mix		Cardio Mix	
4:00 PM - 4:45 PM		Pilates Mix		Pilates Mix		
5:15 PM - 6:15 PM	Zumba	Zumba	Zumba		Zumba	
6:15 PM - 7:00 PM	Tone & Sculpt		Tone & Sculpt		Tone & Sculpt	