

# Long-Term Support Vital In Maintaining Weight Loss

Losing weight is nothing compared to keeping it off, according to a new study that shows successful dieters will gain up to 260 percent of their original loss without continued advice and support.

A recent study of participants in weekly support sessions following a successful diet program at a major New York City hospital spelled the difference between reaching and maintaining ideal weight or gaining it all back again within a year.

Dieters who dropped out of support sessions at the Bronx Veteran's Administration Medical Center regained an average of 6.8 pounds over a year's time. Everyone who stayed with the group, however, continued to reduce, with

losses averaging 4.1 pounds, says Barbara Visocan, R.D., a clinical dietitian with the program.

"There are thousands of ways to lose weight, and most of them work, but after a person goes off the diet, the weight comes back," Visocan says.

"Our professionally-led support group helped dieters not only maintain loss but lose even more. It shows that any organization sponsoring a weight loss program should offer a long-term support group follow-up.

"Often people go on crazy diets, like a day of grapefruit and eggs," Visocan says. "We discussed the pitfalls of fad diets and then taught the four basic food groups concept of

meal planning, because it is easy to learn and can be tailored to the way a person normally eats."

Weight loss also may be in vain, Visocan says, if the successful dieter is not given suggestions for eating on vacation, in restaurants, or tips on snack substitutions and calorie counting.

Assertiveness training - how to say no to someone who has prepared a special dessert - and awareness techniques to help analyze what triggers a cookie binge need to be mastered to avoid plunging back into obesity.

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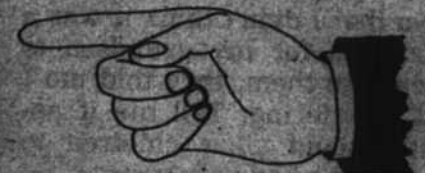


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