

Integrative Weight Loss Program

You all know that weight loss is important. We are bombarded with messages every day from the government, from medical studies, from the media and from our friends and family that we must reduce our weight. Diseases that are a direct result of obesity include cancer, heart disease, stroke, and diabetes to name but a few of the “heavy hitters.”

Many of you know that I have struggled with my own obesity for years (*decades* would be the more truthful answer) and I have lost a large amount with Medifast®. But I started back up that same pathway again despite all of my knowledge. Why? Because I did not understand the mind-body connection nor did I have a proper understanding of hormones and finally (and most importantly) I did not have a proper understanding of myself and my thought patterns.

Now if you think that I am going to be sharing with you some “magical” secret to lose weight, eat whatever you want, and live to be a youthful 100 years old, you might as well stop reading now and line your birdcage with this paper. There *ain't* no such animal (double negatives aside). The FDA recently slapped big, multi-million dollar fines on the makers of TrimSpa®, CortaSlim®, and One-A-Day WeightSmart®, because of their unfounded claims of weight loss. Simply stated, taking one pill a day will not make you lose weight. Eating the “Grapefruit Diet” or the “Cabbage Soup” diet or the “48 Hour Hollywood Diet” will not do anything more than cause water shifts to occur and muscle mass to be lost. Even doing the Atkins diet improperly will *not only not* work but it may actually hurt you.

If you want to lose weight and get into shape for your own health, then I will tell you now that parts of your *rehabilitation* program will be easy and other parts will be difficult. If you are *not* willing to make changes in your lifestyle, some of them dramatic, then go buy some cheap “diet pills” and commiserate with the other fat people who don't want to do anything about their condition that involves healthy changes. If you are a concierge patient of mine, I will try to palliate as much damage as possible but otherwise there is not much else I can do.

Laparoscopic gastric banding and the traditional Roux-en-Y gastric bypass may sound like the “easy solution” to your weight problems but look at the success rate of these surgical procedures. While relatively safe to do, you will see a significant number of these patients will lose some weight and then begin to pack the pounds on again. Why? Did the surgery fail? Well, the stomach is still small so the surgery was a technical success. So why the regaining of weight? Because the surgeon never took into account the brain's response to weight loss (it doesn't like it ever), nor were the hormones ever examined “up close and personal” and then corrected with bioidentical hormones. Combine these two major overlooked factors along with the “just have the surgery and everything will be easy for you” attitude and you have fat people with tiny stomachs. In addition, you begin to have vitamin absorption problems and other issues that begin to appear about eight to ten years after the surgery.

So what will be the program here at Ultimate Living Medical Clinic? Well, it depends on what you want to do. This program will be open to non-concierge patients as well but not in as broad of treatment as the concierge patients will have (you will see that later when I outline them). In addition, when there are costs of testing in my office and there is no insurance coverage for the procedure, then concierge patients will pay less than non-concierge patients. Probably the easiest way is to outline the varying aspects of the program as a whole and then differentiate between the two different programs. If you are already a concierge patient and you wish to participate, just call and make an appointment. If you are non-concierge, you will also be given a number to call and make an appointment to start your weight loss program. If you wish to become a concierge member as you start this weight loss program, you can join when you start the program.

In addition, there are some aspects of the program that require a more in-depth explanation and those are marked with footnotes.

DEXA Scan for Body Fat and Muscle Mass Measurement

We are the only facility in the San Joaquin Valley to have state of the art equipment to find out your exact body fat measurements and muscle mass as well (the Norland XR-46). It is important to get a baseline of your measurements since weight measurements on a scale are not very informative in view of the fact that your weight is only the product of the force of gravity pulling against your mass (Newton's equation $F=mg$). So starvation diets that are *not* metabolically corrected and some of the crazy fad diets cause water shifts and also, if continued for any length of time, muscle mass *loss*. If you just use a scale, you will be quite pleased with your weight loss but if you measured yourself with a DEXA, you would be very unhappy to know that you lost muscle and not fat. If you continue to lose the muscle, your metabolic rate drops. Your brain believes that you are faced with a famine and it will cause a decrease in thyroid hormone to "protect" you from the supposed famine and it gets easier and easier for you to gain weight. So you must be careful. Your worst enemy in weight loss is not your jealous friends...it is your brain.

Resting Metabolic Rate Testing

We are always burning calories for energy to run our body's various functions. As you are sitting here reading this paper, you require energy to have your heart beat, your brain function, your diaphragm to move to allow you to breathe, your intestines to move to help with digestion, etc. If this metabolic rate is lower than normal, it is important to know it so as to compensate for it with a reduction in calories. Everyone is unique and so there is no real one-size-fits-all *lifetime* diet to keep the weight off long term. One way of raising the resting metabolic rate is to increase your muscle mass, since resting muscle requires more calories per kilogram per hour than does "resting" fat. The test itself is simple. You sit comfortably in a chair with a mask over your face and you breathe naturally. If you can do that, you will be able to have your metabolism tested.

Aerobic and Anaerobic Threshold Testing

When you begin an exercise program at a gym, you may notice that you have different target heart rates to reach depending on what your goal is. If you want to lose

weight only, there is a lower rate (also known as the *aerobic threshold*) and if you want to strengthen your cardiovascular fitness, there is the higher rate (also known as the *anaerobic threshold*). How are these numbers calculated for you at the gym? Easy...only by your age. While it is a general “ballpark” figure, the more you exercise, especially if you become biologically younger on an anti-aging program, then the numbers become more and more worthless. The mathematical formula is simple. It first starts with the idea that your maximum heart rate (MHR) is 220 minus your age. Then by taking that figure, you calculate the aerobic threshold by taking 65% of your MHR. The anaerobic threshold is measured at 85% of MHR. Now we have the ability here at Ultimate Living Medical Clinic to measure *your* aerobic and anaerobic thresholds (also known as a VO2 measurement) using the Korr® CardioCoach. It will also come up with an eight week workout plan that is set for *your specific readings* so it is unique to you. These measurements will allow you to maximize your workouts for both fat burning and cardiovascular conditioning. You will need to wear exercise clothes for this test. Please also bring water for you to drink after the test.

Hormone Replacement

Because your aging and overweight body has adapted to its condition, various hormones may have changed to keep your weight to what it is now. This *homeostasis* is not healthy for you and it must be changed. Checking and replacing your hormones, if appropriate, is another vital step in your quest for health. First, we will check your thyroid¹ and sex hormone levels, including testosterone² and estrogens³. A low cortisol can also cause weight gain but it is not routinely checked unless the symptoms are obvious to me. All of these hormones are important for reaching and maintaining a healthy weight. If the hormones are either too high or too low, then obesity can result (depending on the hormone). Once checked, we can begin correction of the hormones. If you are not a member of the practice, we *cannot* check your hormones. We can offer your physician guidance by telling him or her the hormones to check⁴,

¹ Thyroid tends to be low with overweight people primarily because they have done a lot of dieting in the past and this “yo-yo” dieting causes the brain to lower your metabolic rate to “protect” you from “famine” (this is the way that the brain interprets dieting of any kind). The thyroid medication used is Armour® Thyroid and if you want to learn more about Armour, please see my brochure on thyroid replacement therapy.

² If you are male and you have a pot belly, you have low testosterone. If you are a male and diabetic, you have low testosterone. These hormonal deficiencies must be corrected if you want to obtain any significant and lasting weight loss. Low energy in women is also likely to be low testosterone and should be replaced to more youthful levels.

³ Excess estrogens that are seen with birth control pills and with oral hormone replacement therapies for post-menopausal women are notorious in packing the pounds on women. In addition, by taking them there can be a “first pass” response from your liver to cause an increase in the Sex Hormone Binding Globulin. This increase in SHBG can tie up the available testosterone that should be present normally and cause symptoms of low testosterone, including weight gain, depression and loss of sex drive.

⁴ Thyroid hormones to check include TSH, Free T3, Free T4 and Thyroxine Binding Globulin. Sex hormones to check include testosterone, estradiol, estrone, progesterone, dihydrotestosterone, androstenediol glucuronide, sex hormone binding globulin, albumin and PSA (in men only obviously).

what the optimal levels for the hormones are and what hormones are prescribed⁵, if appropriate, to optimize the levels.

Medifast®

Medifast® is the cornerstone of weight loss when you want to lose weight at a fairly rapid pace in a safe and sane manner. It is probably the fastest way to actually lose fat. It starts out as a liquid-only diet but it can progress into various food products that you will use during the entire diet. The base product is the shake that comes in five different flavors. Other products include oatmeal, soups, bars and even eggs. I can't list them all because they are coming up with more products all of the time so this list is nowhere near inclusive.

So how does Medifast® work? It is known as a Very Low Calorie Diet that is also ketogenic (like the Atkins® Diet). The combination of both aspects of the diet make for fairly quick weight loss depending on a few factors: 1. Men lose faster than women due to estrogens in women slowing weight loss; and 2. strict Medifast® only diet or the reduced servings with one meal a day that you will eat in addition to the Medifast® products. There is no "sin" in having the one meal a day and if it helps keep you on track for weight loss while preventing you from "burning out" on Medifast® products, then that is fine by me.

You will not need to see me for the Medifast® program and will instead be seeing other staffers here who have been trained in properly administering the Medifast® program and they can also consult with me about your case if you are "falling off the wagon" in your response to the program.

Once you have reached your goal weight on Medifast® there are a few options that you can do and one option you should never do. You *should never* go back to the way that you ate before. It didn't work for you then, why do you think it would work for you now? In addition, your brain wants to keep you at your original weight so you will need to fight that on a *daily* basis. The options you have once you complete the Medifast® program is to start using Medifast® products routinely as part of your daily diet or to switch over to a Low Glycemic Index Diet.

Low Glycemic Index Diet

This diet is actually quite simple and you really don't need to buy any books to eat this way once you understand the principles of it. This diet can be the one that you want to be on if you only have perhaps 20 lbs to lose or less to start with or you want to eat healthy for the rest of your life. This is also the diet of choice once you complete Medifast®. I have had people ask if they could forego the Medifast® diet and just start on the LGI diet. As long as you understand that weight loss is slow (but present with all other things being equal) but the advantage is that you are "practicing" how you will eat for the rest of your life (if you want a long and healthy one).

⁵ Have your provider contact me with the results to discuss the appropriate replacement regimen.

Please understand that the American Diabetic Association and the American Heart Association both *do not* recognize the low glycemic index of carbohydrates. Frankly, this is motivated by greed and politics more than anything else, in my opinion. Every other health organization in the entire world and all of the scientific research done has shown the LGI to be scientifically valid. However, if the AHA and the ADA were to adopt it, they would lose *lucrative* labeling deals with various food corporations. So I guess money is more important than people's lives when it comes to these "prestigious" organizations. Be wary of their recommendations if they conflict with what other organizations are saying.

The low glycemic index diet utilizes the finding that not all carbohydrates are the same. In a nutshell, there are some carbs that break down rapidly and thus will increase your insulin levels in your body rapidly (*not good*) while there are other carbs that break down slowly and thus do not cause a sudden increase in your insulin levels. High levels of insulin over time lead to an increase in heart disease, strokes, diabetes and other nasty conditions. A simple rule of thumb for LGI carbs...they are unrefined. So all refined carbs need to be eliminated (or drastically reduced to a very low level). Refined carbs include bread, pasta, tortillas or any other flour products (*except* sprouted grain products). No sugar products and no high fructose corn syrup products. For more information about the low glycemic index as well as listings of foods with their glycemic index rating, please go to www.glycemicindex.com.

By the way, another tidbit I just recently learned is that you should also not consume any diet sweeteners. Now don't believe the conspiracy stories about Nutrasweet® causing multiple sclerosis (urban legend) or any other such nonsense. However, it has been shown that when you consume these non-caloric sweeteners, it fools the brain into thinking that you had something sweet and gives you *more* cravings for sweet things. So if you drink any diet sodas and you also find that you have a sweet tooth, try an experiment. Stop all of your diet sodas and the sweeteners in coffee and tea and after one week see how your cravings for sweets are. If you are like me, you will find that the cravings virtually disappeared when I do not drink diet sodas.

Sermorelin Therapy

This is a very recent finding of mine that is not for everyone. Its biggest accomplishment for weight loss is the loss of abdominal fat with its use. Can you use it and eat anything that you want? No! You must be actively involved in a weight loss program to reap the benefits of Sermorelin therapy. It will do more than just lose the fat around the middle...it helps with conditioning and rejuvenating the skin and perhaps even helping to regain the elasticity of the skin to prevent sagging rolls of skin that are associated with weight loss. Finally, it will help all the way around for anyone (male or female) who wants to optimize their weight loss and maximize their physical conditioning.

Sermorelin acetate is the acetate salt of an amidated synthetic 29-amino acid peptide (GRF 1-29 NH₂) that corresponds to the amino-terminal segment of the naturally occurring human growth hormone-releasing hormone (GHRH or GRF) consisting of 44 amino acid residues. This is real scientific lingo stating that while it is not

bioidentical GHRH (it is only 29 amino acids long rather than the natural 44 amino acid residues), it is biologically active and will cause a release of your own endogenous Growth Hormone (GH) from your pituitary gland.

Now some of you know that I have prescribed GH (also known as Somatropin) in the past and some are still on it. However, the State Medical Board is being pressured by the FDA to begin to heavily scrutinize any physician who writes for GH when the patient does not meet the strict criteria (that is still being debated) for GH therapy. Sermorelin does not fall into this category and can be written “off-label”.

So what is Sermorelin? It is injected into the abdominal fat just like GH is every night at bedtime. It is the hormone (actually the “active part” only) that causes your pituitary gland to release GH into your body. In addition, some research is now showing that it also enhances sleep by its direct effects on the sleep center in your brain.

If you desire it and you qualify medically, you can purchase it with a prescription from our office. It is not covered under any insurance program. Speak with Dr. Work about Sermorelin if you are interested further.

Concierge vs Non-Concierge Program

	<i>Concierge</i>	<i>Non-Concierge</i>
Checking hormones	Included	Not included
Correcting hormones	Included	Not included
DEXA scan	Free	First one \$25, then \$50 thereafter
RMR	Billed to insurance	\$50 per test
Aerobic Testing	\$50 per test	\$80 per test
Cost of Medifast	Not included	Not included
Medifast visit	No charge for visit	\$40 per visit
Sermorelin	\$140/3 mg	\$140/3 mg

Conclusion

At this time, this is the whole program that we offer at Ultimate Living Medical Clinic. I believe that it is the most integrative weight loss program that you will find in Fresno, approaching weight loss in as many spheres as possible. If you combine it with your own dedication and your personal commitment to better yourself in the coming year, then I do not see how you can do anything but lose your excess fat and increase your healthy muscle mass.

If you are interested in any of these programs, please contact our office to schedule an appointment.