

Overweight? Give Yourself Some 'TLC' (Therapeutic Lifestyle Change)

If you've ridden that roller coaster of dieting, losing weight, gaining weight and dieting again, you have PLENTY of company. Long term successful weight loss is tough. Making healthier changes to many facets of your life, and being consistent, will result in slow but steady weight loss, and improved overall health.

Change starts with YOU. Just as people are more successful at quitting smoking when they alone are ready to do so, only you can make therapeutic changes in your life. As Dr. Bernie Siegel, author, surgeon and speaker says, 'Only you can change yourself'. A health care professional, a relative, spouse or loved one may prescribe, advise, admonish, encourage, bribe, threaten or otherwise try to motivate you to adopt 'TLCs' but only YOU can do it.

Here are 10 TLC's to start giving yourself NOW.

1. Gradually change the types of foods you eat. Eat a variety of foods. Eliminate fast food.
2. Eat only when you are hungry (and not for any other reason) and stop before you feel completely full. It takes a few minutes for the 'full' signal from the belly to get to the brain.
3. Use many fresh fruits and vegetables in your diet each day (ideally, at each meal).
4. Look at your portion sizes. Be honest. They are probably too big. Try using a lunch sized plate instead of a dinner plate. Share!
5. Eliminate all soft drinks. They are nothing but sugar, chemicals and bubbles, and can pack on the pounds. Try keeping a jug of water in the fridge, squeeze a little fresh lemon, lime or mint sprigs for flavor. How about low-fat milk or soy milk?
6. Turn off the TV. Do not eat a meal while watching TV. You will miss your 'full' signal, and eat more than you need. After your evening meal, take a walk or do some other activity that gets you moving.
7. Choose breads, cereals, rice and pastas made from whole grains. The fiber is filling, takes longer to digest (so you avoid swings in blood sugar) and keeps your plumbing working!
8. Choose lean proteins and do not fry them! Eat only naked (skinned) chicken, and try salmon, tuna or soy proteins. Remember portion sizes too (about the size of a deck of cards). Add herbal seasonings instead of salt.
9. Eat 'foods of color'! The more vibrant the color, the higher the amount of anti-oxidants (the good guys who take out your cellular trash).
10. Take small steps to increase your overall physical activity level. At lunch, invite a co-worker and take a walk around your building. Park far away from the entrance to the store. Take up dancing or some other fun, active pastime.

We all make choices! Choose today to give yourself a large healthy portion of TLC. Good health habits are in your hands. As you begin, or if you slip up, remember these tiny but important words, “If it is to be, it is up to me.”

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