



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **WHO SUCCEEDS AT LOSING WEIGHT?**

With the holidays quickly approaching many people turn to thinking about losing weight. Dieters mistakenly tend to focus on losing weight instead of maintaining weight loss, according to James Hill, PhD, a professor of pediatrics and medicine and director of the Center for Human Nutrition at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center in Denver. And once dieters achieve their desired weight, most tend to return to their former eating and exercise habits and regain their weight, Hill said at the American Medical Association briefing.

Now the good news, as co-director of the National Weight Control Registry, a long-term study of over 3000 "successful losers" of weight, Hill knows four common behaviors among those who have successfully maintained weight loss. The behaviors include the following:

- Eat a low-fat, high carbohydrate diet
- Eat breakfast almost every day
- Self-monitor by weighing themselves daily and keeping a food journal
- Exercise for about an hour each day

Participants in the National Weight Control Registry have maintained an average weight loss of over 80 pounds for over five years. The "successful losers" also ate an average of five times per day, which helped to spread out their calorie consumption throughout the day, avoided fast food, and ate out an average of 1.5 times a week. They also sought ways to increase their physical activity levels by doing little things such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator and parking their car at the end of the parking lot.

More important, almost 90 percent of the registry participants have failed at previous weight loss attempts. "This puts out the message that not everyone fails," said Hills. Most experts consider success as losing 10 percent of the body weight and maintaining that loss for at least one year. With this as a measuring stick, Hill estimates that one out of five people succeed in their weight loss maintenance efforts.

At ten percent weight loss, however, offers significant health improvements such as lowering blood sugar levels, lessening the severity of sleep apnea, lessening joint problems, and improving gynecological problems. And more important, people have a better quality of life. "Not only are people healthier, but they are happier," Hill said.

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