

Fertility & Midwifery Care Center



Wait! Let's talk about your weight...

Who among us hasn't tried to control their weight?

It has been said that there are two kinds of people in respect to the epic struggle that is weight management: those who worry about their weight and those who lie about worrying about their weight. We are not sure this exactly true, but we have to say the majority of patients we see in the office are concerned about their weight.

There aren't any quick-fix gimmicks or magic pills that allow you to lose weight while you sleep or other such nonsense, but we do know of a tool that we have found very useful: a calorie counter. There is something powerful about recording every calorie you consume over the course of a day. When doing this, two things happen:

- 1) You will consume less food overall
- 2) You will be amazed at the "hidden" calories you consume

By "hidden," we mean those calories that you just don't consider meaningful when you consider your total daily intake. Did you know, for example, that a can of Coke® contains 140 calories? Drink three of those on a hot summer day and that could represent over 1/3 of your daily calorie intake goal (assuming 1,300 calories per day goal). How about a nice glass of orange juice? That's 140 calories. How about a quick cheeseburger at McDonald's® for lunch? That's 330 calories, more if you add mayo. And don't forget the fries – they add another 380 calories (medium size).

We are not suggesting there is anything inherently wrong with a can of Coke, or a glass of orange juice, or even a cheeseburger once in a while. I'm merely pointing out that the calories add up quickly and the weight loss game is all about the math of calorie consumption. And if you have a specific calorie goal in mind as part of your weight loss or weight management program, these, "hidden" calories will sabotage your work. And of course, many of the foods we are told are healthy are in fact very high in calories, irrespective of their "healthiness."

If weight loss is your goal you must absolutely do one thing: take in fewer calories than your body uses.

There are three ways to accomplish this:

- 1) Consume fewer calories
- 2) Use more calories through physical activity
- 3) Our favorite, consume fewer calories and use more calories through physical activity

Don't kill the messenger. These are the only options. All weight loss plans are designed around these options in one manner or another. A simple but significant first step in any plan should be to establish a daily calorie intake goal and to record your performance against that goal. What should your daily goal be? It depends on your age, your gender, your activity level and your desired weight loss.

There are numerous internet sites dedicated to calorie counting, and most sites have corresponding smart phone apps that allow you to input your data remotely.

We are particularly fond of www.livestrong.com. The "My Plate" feature allows you to establish a daily calorie intake goal based on your age, weight and gender. It also allows you to "credit" your calorie balance based on any exercise you do. You can also view summary information about your daily, weekly and monthly caloric intake – including the percentage points, fats and carbohydrates you have consumed over time. The site has numerous additional features such as excellent information on general health and healthy living, cancer support, weight loss/exercise forums and tools to help you stop smoking. Best of all, it's completely free. So make this the time you get serious about your weight management program. Check out www.livestrong.com, start recording your daily calories and watch what happens. And of course, post your experiences on our Facebook page so others may benefit: www.facebook.com/stroudobgyn.