

## Healthwatch: Eat in Moderation—the “No Diet” Weight Loss Plan Ann Pinning, Parish Nurse

Dieting is the most common New Year's resolution, but rarely kept. By now you may have broken yours. The following are excerpts from REAL SIMPLE's "No-Diet Diet" which encourages changing ones' eating habits and attitudes about dieting. Rather than go on quick weight loss diets which don't work, long term changes have to be made for continued success. Practice **moderation**, and focus on healthier food options, and you'll notice improvements over time. Here are a few highlights that I hope will help:

1. **Check your BMI** at [www.realsimple.com/bmi](http://www.realsimple.com/bmi). If you are overweight—a BMI >25, or obese--BMI  $\geq$  30 (which brings with it some health risks) you'll need to set realistic goals. Feel good about the way you look at a healthy weight. Give yourself time to reach your goal—1-2 lbs/wk is a realistic weight loss.
2. **Nutrition rules** haven't changed much: Follow a pyramid where fruits and veggies and whole grains (Fiber content  $\geq$  3 gms/serving) are consumed the most and fats, sugars, and white flour are consumed the least. Avoid looking for dietary help to change your metabolism. The only tool that will help with that is to add more muscle, which burns more calories—bottom line—EXERCISE! Your new eating pattern should be one that you can stick to for a lifetime—rapid weight loss plans are temporary. Consider cutting out 200 calories/day from your normal eating pattern—this could be a second helping of pasta, or 20 ounces of sweet drink—and over 1 year you'll lose an average of 20 lbs.! Begin to walk briskly 30 minutes 3-4 times per week and a person who weighs 150 lbs. will lose 10 pounds in a year. These small permanent changes in your lifestyle can make a significant difference over time.
3. **Moderation is the key**. More importantly than avoiding “bad” foods, is avoiding “bad” portions. Cut down on portion sizes. Consider using your fist as a guideline for serving sizes. Two fists (your own size fists!) of food on your plate at meal time should be sufficient.
4. **Learn to listen to your tummy**—decipher true hunger from just thirst, or boredom, or cravings. If you feel hungry, drink a glass of water. If you still feel the pangs, then eat only until those pangs are gone.
5. **Don't let yourself get overly hungry** which can lead to bingeing. Keep healthy snacks in your car or purse—a handful of nuts or trail mix, fruit, etc. You're less likely to indulge in junk food on the go if you have healthy food available.

*"A companion of gluttons disgraces the father," Pr 28:7b.*