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### SO, YOU WANT TO LOSE WEIGHT FOR GOOD IN 2011 .... ?

Happy New Year! I am a new BFG dietician, based in the Medical Centre, Hammersmith Barracks in Herford. I hope you all had a lovely Christmas. You maybe had a delicious Christmas meal with your family, a few mince pies, gorgeous Christmas pudding with brandy sauce, some nibbles and few glasses of mulled wine etc... And now you are back to work and find it difficult to buckle your belts? Do you think it is a good time to get into (or back to) a healthy lifestyle and make a New Year resolution - lose weight and keep it off for good? If so, this is just the right article for you to read!

#### **Weight gain and weight loss mechanism**

Even though we all need food for energy like a rocket needs fuel to take off, the mechanism of weight gain and loss is not exactly rocket science. If our energy intake exceeds our body's needs, the result is weight gain. Conversely, eating less than we need, or using more energy (through exercise etc.) than we replenish leads to weight loss.

We all had a good time, didn't we? So, don't let's feel guilty! Let's move on and start fresh!

#### **Goal setting**

So, first of all, think why you want to loose weight. Do you want to perform better in training? Do you want to wear that dress you bought before Christmas but which does not fit any more? Do you want to avoid people asking you when the baby is due?

It may be useful to use the BMI<sup>1</sup> chart to get an idea what your ideal body weight is. We all need realistic targets. For example, you are 98 kg at the moment and your ideal body weight is 65 kg

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<sup>1</sup> The BMI indicates whether someone is under- or overweight. It is computed as weight (kg) / height (m) x height (m). Persons with a BMI 25 – 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> are considered overweight and BMI 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> and above are obese. However, due to their higher amount of muscle tissue, especially soldiers appear to have higher BMI; therefore, they also need to consider their waist circumference to determine whether their weight is healthy. More information can be obtained at [http://www.bfgnet.de/bfghs/live\\_healthily.html](http://www.bfgnet.de/bfghs/live_healthily.html)

according to BMI, so you need to loose 33 kg. That is a lot and not easily achievable. If you set your goal to 85 kg, that's merely 13 kg to go. Even though being 85 kg still classifies you as overweight, the important thing here is that you set an initial REALISTIC goal. You can always change it once you achieve your initial goal.

We know from research that losing 0.5 – 1.0 kg per week is ideal. So, if you think of achieving 2 kg per month to start with, that would be realistic. Why not making a 6 month time goal weight here?

I would like to be \_\_\_\_ kg by end of July 2011

### **Which 'diet'?**

Atkins diet, Blücher's rhubarb and garlic diet, cabbage soup diet, detox diet etc.... there are so many ways of 'dieting'. How many of your friends or family or even yourself followed one of these so called 'dieting' methods and successfully lost weight and kept it? What has been found most efficient is NOT following a specific 'diet' - it is lifestyle modification. How long are you doing this for? One month? 6 months? No, it is for good.

### **Learn about yourself and make changes – top tips!**

- **Keep a food diary**

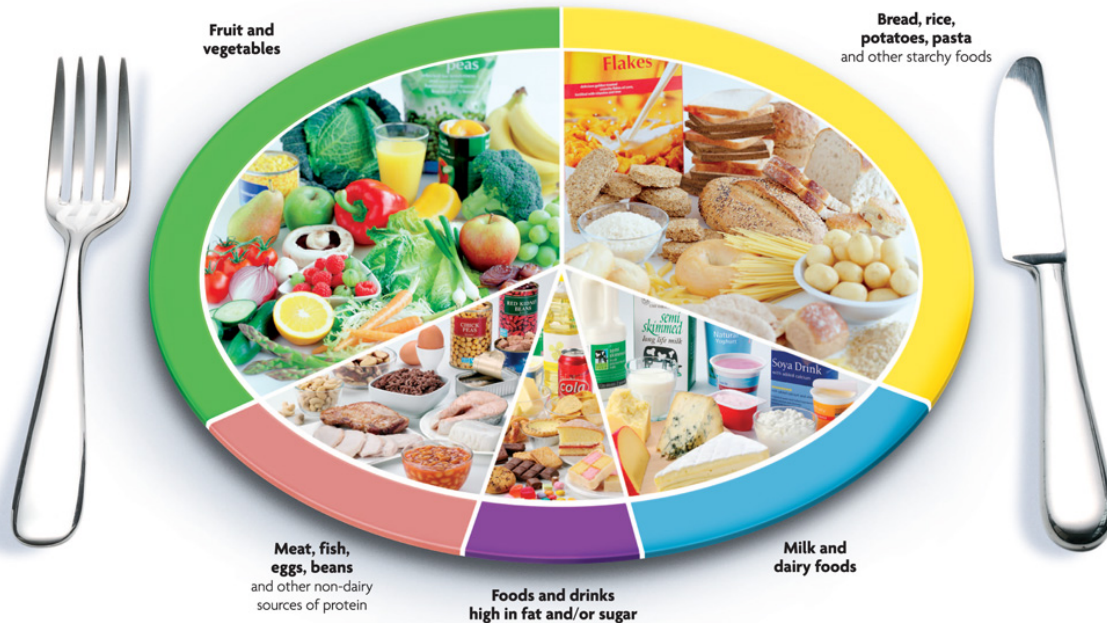
You need to know where you are getting your balance wrong. Are you eating too much? Or are you not having enough exercise? Or could it be both? One of the most useful ways of getting to know your eating pattern is by keeping a food diary. There are several reasons for this. Some people automatically stop nibbling and start eating healthier if they become aware what they are actually eating - by writing it down, for example as a reflective diary. If you keep a food diary for 3 days, this may help you to get a picture of your eating pattern and you will be able to identify where the problems lie.

- **Get the balance right**

It is a scientifically proven fact that our body needs the various types of food in specific proportions (see the Eat Well Plate below). By cutting out one of the food groups, you are not doing your body a favour - neither by overeating a specific food. It is hardly possible to get the balance right at every meal (or even over a couple of days, with all those temptations during the festive season). Thus, try to get it right over time such as a week.

# The eatwell plate

Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. It shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.



(Source: <http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet/eatwellplate/>)

- **Control your sugar and fat intake**

Have a close look at your intake of sugary (especially drinks) and fatty foods, snacks and supper. Are you adding sugar into your tea/coffee? Which fizzy pop do you normally choose – regular or diet/zero? Do you tend to choose chips rather than boiled potatoes when you go out? Or perhaps you usually fill the holes in your 'sweet tooth' before going to bed? If so, have a look at tables below.

WAYS TO DECREASE YOUR FAT INTAKE		
	CUT DOWN ON	TRY INSTEAD
<b>FATS</b>	Frying or roasting with fat, butter, margarine	Grill, boil, bake, casserole, microwave. Low fat spread. Spray oil.
<b>MEATS</b>	Pies, sausages, beef burgers, salami and pasties.	Chicken, turkey, fish, lean cuts of beef, lamb, pork. Lean mince. Cut visible fat of meat.
<b>MILKS AND YOGHURTS</b>	Full fat milk, condensed or	Semi skimmed milk.

	evaporated milk, cream or Greek yoghurt.	Low fat yoghurt.
<b>CHEESE</b>	Full fat cheese	Reduced fat cheese. Cottage cheese. Reduced fat cream cheese.
<b>DRESSINGS</b>	Mayonnaise, salad cream, oils, sour cream, thousand island dressing etc.	Low fat dressing, balsamic vinegar, lemon juice, low fat natural yoghurt.

<b>WAYS TO DECREASE SUGAR INTAKE</b>	
<b>Cut Down On</b>	<b>Try Instead</b>
Sugar, honey, syrup	Artificial sweeteners (eg: canderol, hermesetas)
Fizzy drinks, squashes	Sugar free squashes, Diet/Light/Zero fizzy drinks
Sweets, chocolates, biscuits, cakes	Fresh fruit, plain biscuits, plain or fruit scone
Ordinary Fruit yoghurt, instant whips, jelly, ice cream, tinned fruit in syrup.	"Diet" yoghurt, sugar free whips, sugar free jelly, tinned fruit in natural juices
Sugar coated breakfast cereals eg. Sugar puffs, Frosties, muesli containing sugar	High fibre breakfast cereals: weetabix, fruit n fibre, shredded wheat, porridge, bran flakes.

- **Be realistic**

Limit yourself to 1 or 2 changes per time. Always chose something you can easily do. Give your stomach and brain a chance to get used to a smaller portion size. We are not making changes for next couple of months - this is a change for life. What do you find more agreeable: starting big with an extreme diet that promises tremendous weight loss in a short time... and giving up soon because it's too strenuous; or getting used to cutting down just one table spoon of a specific food per meal... and be surprised by the results after a couple of months?!

- **Be positive**

Most of us like our food. Thus, if you are trying to loose weight, it doesn't help to think: I have to fast like a hermit for one month... I mustn't eat this, I can't eat that. As long as you keep the right balance between the different food groups, you may eat anything you enjoy - just a little bit less of each. Small modifications are more likely to help you to achieve weight loss and keep it low for good!

### **It is not 'exercise'; it is 'physical activity'!**

When you hear the word 'exercise', what do you think? Probably gym, swimming, jogging? Excellent - but if you can't exercise, for whatever reasons, don't worry. You don't have to find time for physical activity. Just think of where you could go that little step extra. For example, rather than grit and salt, grab a shovel and a broom to fight that snow on your driveway. If you normally use escalators or lifts, try the stairs. These little changes do make a difference – they lead to weight loss and give you a feeling of achievement. The key is you are likely to continue. This is the most important!

### **If you need more help**

Dietitian's clinics run once a month at medical centres of Hohne, Herford, Gütersloh, Sennelager and JHQ. If you feel you need help or have a medical condition, consult your GP or any health care professional for a referral. You can also access to the following websites where you can obtain useful information;

- British Dietetic Association Fact Sheet <http://www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/index.html>
- Change for Life <http://www.nhs.uk/change4life/Pages/change-for-life.aspx>
- Obesity (NHS Choices) <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Obesity/Pages/Introduction.aspx>  
(please look at the right side of this page 'useful link')
- Overeaters Anonymous Great Britain <http://www.oagb.org.uk/>

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