**Weight Management: Frequently Asked Questions**

**Answered by Paul Klink, MD, Weight Management Physician**

**Q: Is it better to lose weight quickly or slowly?**
**A:** Generally, it is healthier to lose weight at a rate of one to two pounds per week. Faster rates of weight loss can be associated with gallstone formation, loss of muscle tissue, and poorer overall nutrition.

Faster rates of weight loss teach us that it is easy to lose weight, and we do not work on maintaining weight reduction. If we regain the weight, we will just lose it again, right? Unfortunately, that statement is incorrect. When we lose weight quickly, we lose muscle, and when weight is regained, it is predominately fatty tissue. In the future you can lose weight, but with increasing difficulty the more times this cycle is repeated.

**Q: Should I take supplements to help me lose weight?**
**A:** The research shows that supplements can have value in assisting with weight loss. However, in my experience, they can be expensive, and eventually people need to move back into the world of “real food”.

The key with any weight management plan is to be focused on long term sustainable results, and supplements are more often focused on short term results. Learning how to enjoy and have a healthy relationship with real food usually is the best approach to achieve a long term benefit.

**Q: What should my goal weight be?**
**A:** I usually do not give people a specific goal weight to achieve because we are too inclined to be set up for success or failure when we are given a specific number. If we reach that number, we are successful, but then what? We may not maintain our weight and regain. Or, if we do not reach the goal, we feel we have failed, and even if good things have happened with our health and weight, we give up and slip back to unhealthy behaviors.

I believe that the emphasis should be on long term sustainable healthier behaviors (activity, better nutrition and better emotional health) and a healthy weight that is maintained will be a natural consequence.

Health and quality of life are not measured by a specific weight.

**Q: How can I know my calorie goal to achieve a healthy weight?**
**A:** At www.SummitHealth.org/HealthyWeight you will find a calorie counter. You can enter your information on this, and it will give you calorie options for gradual weight loss. One to two pounds per week is recommended. Over time, this same number of calories will become what it takes to maintain your reduced healthier weight. Therefore, this number of calories is usually right for you forever. Most people are surprised by the number of calories, since they are generous. Remember, this calorie amount is forever, so it needs to be achievable, and not leave you hungry. Otherwise, it cannot be sustained.

**Q: Will insurance cover office visits for your services?**
**A:** Office visits cover the medical issues associated with excessive weight. Therefore they are considered medically justified. Almost all insurance companies cover these services. With healthier lifestyle and weight reduction, medications can often be reduced, diabetes delayed or prevented, etc. This is all monitored by Dr. Paul Klink during your program, in conjunction with your regular doctor.

**Q: How much time does an office visit take?**
**A:** The initial office visit with Dr. Klink is comprehensive and lasts one hour. Several pages of intake history are filled out by the patient in advance of the appointment, and are reviewed at the visit. As the program continues appointments will become shorter.

**Q: How often do I need to see the weight management doctor?**
**A:** Visits are scheduled at one to two week intervals and become less frequent over time. Dr. Klink will see you as often as necessary to be supportive to your journey. Studies show that support with a new program needs to be ongoing for six months to be effective.

**Q: Do I need a referral from my doctor to see Dr. Klink?**
**A:** A referral is not needed for most insurance plans. If you usually need referrals for most services, then that is likely the case for Weight Management Services. Consultation notes are sent to your primary care provider with your permission after each office visit, and care is intended to compliment your regular care and relationship with your doctor.