

New weight program aims to get women off the diet bandwagon

By KAREN SMITH

At the age of six months, Pat was put on a diet.

"The doctor told my mother to feed me skim milk formula because I was overweight."

For Pat (not her real name), dieting has become a life-long ordeal. Like so many others, she is always trying some new diet to take off extra pounds.

She does lose weight when she sticks to a diet.

But the moment she slacks off, the weight comes back.

A recent survey showed 70 per cent of Canadian women want to reduce their weight.

One fourth of Canadians — six million people — are currently dieting.

Why have we become so weight conscious? Look around. Extremely thin people crowd every advertisement, TV show, movie and fashion magazine. Thin is seen as beautiful and fashionable — the key to wealth and power.

Healthy weight

But fashions change, sometimes for health reasons. Today's thin look is being replaced by a new concept of healthy weight, says Jessica Mackay, nutrition educator for the Halton Regional Health Department.

Most of us were not meant to be fashion model thin, she adds. Just as people vary widely in height, people come in a wide range of weights. Society's super thin images are simply unrealistic for most people.

The Halton Regional Health Department wants to get Halton women off the diet bandwagon and on to healthier eating and exercise habits.

That's why the department is offering a free eight-week program designed to help women become less obsessed with their body weight. It is called the Halton Healthy Weight Program.

Weight is fine

The new concept recognizes that there is no one ideal weight for everyone of the same height because people have different body shapes and frames.

Instead, there is a range of weights that are healthy for your height. You pick the weight within the healthy range that looks right and feels right for you.

Your weight is fine, adds Ms MacKay, as long as it doesn't put you at risk of developing a health problem.

The program refers to a body mass index chart which determines your weight range, she says.

"The concept has changed so it's not just one number anymore. There's a range now," Ms MacKay explains.

If you have a big frame, or are muscular, you might be at the top end of the healthy weight range. If you have a small frame or tiny build, you might be at the bottom end of the range.

Prime example

Pat at five-foot-five inches tall is a prime example. Her ideal weight according to other diet programs she has used ranges from 120 to 125. She has gone down to that weight, but has never felt healthy.

"What people say is that I don't look well," says the Milton resident. "At about 140, I felt my best."

(According to the body mass index chart, her healthy range is from 125 to 165 pounds.)

The program also deals with nutrition according to Canada's food guide, fine-tuning your eating habits, becoming more active and having the right attitude.

"We don't even mention the word diet," adds Mrs. MacKay.

To find out more about the self-help program, which begins June 27, call the Halton Regional Health Department at 639-5141.

Meetings will be held every Wednesday night at the CHERISH Parent-Child Centre in the Optimist Centre on Commercial Street from 7 to 9 p.m. Space is limited.

The Ad for Murray Wilson that ran June 15, should have read:



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correct price ***8,995⁰⁰**

1986 Olds 98 only 56,000 miles

1987 Chev Cavalier approx. 65,000 miles

1986 Buick Park Ave. Only 70,000 miles

Murray Wilson

878-2355



Photo by JOHN WARREN

New wheels

The Scotch Block Women's Institute recently donated \$35,000 to the North Halton Association for the Developmentally Handicapped (NHADH) to purchase a new van. The previous vehicle was destroyed in an accident in March. From left to right are: Mrs. Davis, vice-president of the Institute; Mrs. Hopkin, W. I. president; Mrs. Logan, W.I. member in good standing; Pat Leigh, president of the NHADH; Kelly Long, resource development co-ordinator of NHADH; and Andy Rotama, executive director of NHADH.



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