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Wellness for Life Program

Weight loss consists of common sense diet, exercise and sometimes the addition of medications. Anorexic agents and mild stimulants are designed to “jump start” weight loss. Class IV controlled substances can be considered mildly habit forming. We use only FDA approved agents and discuss all options that are currently available.

All medications can have side effects. Anorexic agents can cause elevated blood pressure, rapid heartbeat and anxiety. They can cause hyperthyroidism to get out of control. There are a host of other possible and less likely side effects ranging from diarrhea to skin rashes. When used with other medication, they occasionally can cause heart problems; some requiring surgery. Anorexic agents are not known to cause heart problems on their own, but that is not inconceivable. Some anorexic agents might accelerate hardening of the arteries, though if a person kept weight off, it should prevent heart disease.

The ideal candidate would be a person over 20, but not elderly, who has a BMI of 30 or more and no other active health problems. People with high blood pressure and diabetes can take anorexic agents if they are closely monitored and keep their disease under control. Ultimately, weight loss can cure high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, prevent heart disease, and the development of several cancers.

In order to be in the program, a person must have an initial visit to screen for disease that would prevent or complicate the use of anorexic agents. There will be screening lab work to include CBC, Metabolic Profile, Lipid Panel and TSH. This needs to have been done at least within the last year. If a person has had heart disease, they could take anorexic agents only if their disease is not active and they have a normal stress test within the last 6 months. An EKG is performed after the first month of treatment. No person who has had a stroke, who has angina, or is too debilitated to do light exercise can be in the program.

People in the program must come in on a weekly basis for 1 month; then every 2 weeks for the next 5 months; then monthly to be weighed and discuss progress, pitfalls, and what is working. Anyone experiencing side effects is expected to report them as soon as possible. Everyone is expected to avoid obvious sources of unhealthy calories, like

sodas, fast food, fried foods, candy and ice cream. Everyone is expected to at least attempt 30 minutes of moderately vigorous activity 5 days a week. Walking and resistance training are a good beginning. Men and women both should take a multivitamin and vitamin D. If after 3 months, you have not lost at least 5% of your body weight, the medication will be discontinued and we will discuss other medications and reasons for lack of weight loss.

In order to achieve long term success, lifestyle changes are a must. We aim for a 1-2 pound weight loss per week. Some medications we prescribe the medications for 3 months and then put you on a “drug holiday” for 2 months to evaluate how your lifestyle changes are working and to allow your body to readjust to being without the kickstart. During this 2 month period, the goal is to not gain weight. After 2 months we will repeat the 3 months of medication if needed.

The initial program cost is \$85 for established patients and \$100 for new patients. The weekly visits are \$20 each, the every 2 week visits are \$25 each, and the monthly visits are \$50 each. These are payable by cash or credit/debit card. We are not accepting checks. Insurance cannot be billed. The program visit cost does not include lab work, stress test or tests or treatment required in the case of side effects. It does cover all services at Everhart Primary Health Care. Participants need to understand that the program is intended for those who have been unable to lose weight. Just about any diet plan can be used, as long as unhealthy foods are avoided and portions are restricted. We are here to help you understand how food choices can affect your weight loss efforts, so we ask that you bring a food and exercise log with you to each visit.