

The 30 Pound Club

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November 14, 2010 – Grand Rapids, MI

A Different 300 Calories

One of the prevailing questions when it comes to weight loss is this: is it really just about the calories? A corollary to that would be: is it about the quality of the calories or just the total calories we eat?

A college professor of Human Nutrition at Kansas State University used himself as an example for a class he was teaching. Dr. Mark Haub starting eating 300-calorie meals every three hours. Sound familiar? He limited himself to less than 1,800 calories per day. But it was what he ate that was interesting: Twinkies, Doritos, Oreos—oh, and the occasional can of green beans or a few celery sticks along with a protein shake and a multivitamin. (And by the way, for 300 calories, you get about two Twinkies or 5.5 Oreos or 24 Doritos chips. Or mix it up and have a Twinkie, an Oreo, and 18 Doritos—yum!)

The results? He lost 27 pounds in two months. I know what you're thinking: what happened to his cholesterol and other health markers? His bad LDL-cholesterol dropped 20% and his good HDL-cholesterol increased by 20%. His triglycerides also decreased by 39%. His Body Mass Index decreased by four units from overweight to a normal BMI.

The question is simple: Is he healthier eating junk food? That's the question he asks himself. The biometrics say yes, but he's not sure. The reason he did it was to attempt to take foods that most people have easy access to and see if he could lose weight strictly by portion control. There are many areas where fresh vegetables and quality proteins just aren't available, whether in inner cities or in isolated areas. He proved that it was possible to lose weight without them, shopping only at the convenience store.

What he doesn't know is the long-term effects of eating his Twinkie Diet. While markers for heart disease decreased, what about the risk of cancer and other immune-system diseases? No way to tell with just a two-month experiment with one subject.

I think what he did was important. He showed that it's about the calories when it comes to losing weight. While it seems extreme, he also kept the fat grams to less than 60 grams and sustained his protein intake using a high-quality source of protein without fat. Most importantly, he controlled how much he ate. Remember the old Lay's Potato Chip commercial: Bet you just can't eat just one! Well, he showed that you can. You can eat the chips and the Oreos and the Twinkies if you control the amount.

So what does that mean for us? We should focus on the healthiest choices of food available to us because health is more than reaching a normal body weight. But we can have the slice of cake, the piece of chocolate, the glass of beer, or even the chicken wings if we control the portion. Whether it's the healthiest, organically grown food or the junkiest food we can find, it's all about the calories.

30 Pound Club on Facebook

Give me your opinion on Dr. Haub's approach. Like it or not? Every week I ask you as the members to post things to help us all. Give us your opinion of the Twinkie Diet. I've started the ball rolling. Let's keep it moving as we roll toward the end of 2010. We're in this thing together. We need to support one another. Join and post. The idea is if we help others, we'll learn more about how to help ourselves.

One and Done.

What are you prepared to do today?™

Dr. Chet

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