

## Weight Loss with Appetite Suppressants



The OB-GYNs of Hoffman and Associates want women to feel comfortable discussing all aspects of their health with their provider. We commonly answer questions regarding weight gain, weight loss, diet and exercise, and encourage you to discuss these topics with your doctor.

Many women are looking for a quick and easy solution to weight control. You need to understand - **THERE IS NO QUICK AND EASY WAY TO LOSE WEIGHT AND KEEP IT OFF.** It requires you to change your eating and exercise habits AND MAINTAIN these new habits throughout your lifetime. Appetite suppressants are a way to help take some weight off initially - they give you a boost, and sometimes make you feel better about yourself - but only healthy eating and exercise will keep the weight off.

Phentermine has been around for years. When starting on phentermine, we initially prescribe a 15mg to 30mg pill in the morning with breakfast (low fat - toast with jam, low fat cereal with skim milk, low fat yogurt with a banana, etc.). This dose lasts for 10 to 12 hours, so please take it early in the day. While the purpose of taking this drug is to lose weight, too much weight loss too soon is bad. **DO NOT STARVE YOURSELF.** If you lose too much too quickly, we will not refill your prescription. Also, make sure you are drinking plenty of fluid (water, lemonade, low calorie juices, etc. Try to avoid coffee and a lot of diet sodas). Also, make sure you eat dinner (small, protein rich lunch, please). And make sure dinner is healthy (skinless white chicken with steamed vegetables, low carb pasta with low fat sauce, pork chop with baked potato - **NO BUTTER** - and a salad, etc.) If you don't eat dinner, you will be starving in the morning and probably overeat, so **EAT DINNER.**

Some people will feel a little shaky the first several days on phentermine. This usually passes within 2 to 3 days. If it seems to persist, we can lower the dose (from 30 mg to 15 mg) to see if that helps. Some women will get loose bowels or constipation (less commonly). That usually corrects itself within the first few weeks). Taking a multivitamin daily and 1000 mg Calcium is a good idea.

We suggest for those women trying to lose 25 lbs or less, you start weaning off the phentermine after the second month. Take the pill every other day for two weeks, then every third day, until you are down to 1 pill a week (usually Sunday) then stop completely. Hopefully, at this point you are eating healthy and exercising and won't regain the weight you've lost. For those women trying to lose more than 25 lbs., you may want to continue the medication daily for 3 to 4 months and then start the weaning process. We will not continue anyone on the medication for longer than six months. It is not healthy for you.

When you first start taking the phentermine, you will need to return to the office in 1 month for a weight and blood pressure check and to talk about your regimen. Please remember, your insurance does not cover the medication or these visits. Make sure you call and check prices at a variety of pharmacies. They can vary by a significant amount.

Please notify us of any medications you are taking when starting phentermine. Also, let us know if any of your other medications change. There can be interactions with these medications, which require you to stop the phentermine. Also, you

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## Weight Loss with Appetite Suppressants *continued*



should not be taking the phentermine if you are trying to get pregnant. If you wish to lose weight before pregnancy, please make sure you are using effective contraception - **AVOID** pregnancy while on these medications.

As for the long term dietary and exercise plan, following this “diet” is good for you and your family. Many women feel they must have junk food and high fat foods around the house for their husband or children. Husbands and children can and should follow these dietary guidelines. Healthy eating is for everyone, not just women who want to lose weight. You want to follow a healthy carb/low fat diet. Fat can sneak into foods without you realizing it. Make sure you read ALL food labels. Easy ways to cut out fat include changing to low fat or no fat items such as margarine, mayonnaise, cheese, cream cheese, salad dressing, yogurt and ice cream. Stay away from whole milk. Skim milk is best; it even has more calcium than whole milk. If you want a snack, **STAY AWAY** from potato chips (unless they are low fat), corn chips, cheese doodles and nachos. Try pretzels, they usually have little or no fat. Absolutely no frying - bake or broil (in canola oil, not butter). Keep red meat to one meal a week. If you want a burger or tacos, use lean, ground turkey. Same goes for sausage or bacon (use turkey products). Stay away from white carbs (**NO WHITE FLOUR, WHITE SUGAR and WHITE RICE.**) Eat lots of vegetables (raw is best; raw vegetables retain all of the vitamins and minerals that can be lost in cooking). Eat fresh fruit in moderation.

When you first start changing your eating habits, you should refrain from eating out. Meals in restaurants tend to be loaded with fat. After eating low fat for several weeks, you may find you develop stomach pains and diarrhea after eating a high fat meal. This is normal. The enzymes to digest fat are reduced on a low fat diet, so the fat goes right through you, giving you severe stomach cramps and painful, odorous diarrhea. It's a sign your body is adjusting to healthier eating.

The third factor in losing weight and keeping it off, though just as important as healthy eating, is **EXERCISE**. Yes, it is hard to fit it into your schedule, but that doesn't mean it's okay to skip exercising. As much as every mother would like to think - chasing toddlers and young children helps, it does not burn calories. Not every woman has to get out and run 5 miles a day to lose weight and keep it off. But, to get the fat off your body, you need to decrease the calories you take in and burn the fat on your body. That requires elevating your heart rate and keeping it elevated for more than 45 minutes most days of the week. In other words, you're going to have to sweat a little.

If you have not exercised recently, start out slow and build. If it's walking around the block one time initially, that's okay. Just **GET OUT AND START**. With time, increase the distance you walk and the speed. Once you start losing weight, you will have to tone your muscles or you'll be flabby. So, get an exercise tape or develop your own exercise plan. The internet is full of exercise programs. Please, don't leave exercise out of your daily routine. It will make you feel so much better. This absolutely does **NOT** require you to join a gym. You'll be amazed at the difference you see over the first 2 to 3 weeks.

I hope that this handout has helped lay the groundwork to help you lose the weight that you want and maintain your new weight. Remember, you didn't gain this weight overnight and you won't lose it overnight. And, you won't keep the weight off if you return to the old eating habits you had in the past.

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