

Weight Loss: **THE REAL SECRET WEAPON**



It's not a pill. It's not a diet. It's really quite simple.... Keeping a **daily exercise and nutrition journal** is the true secret weapon. That's right. A daily exercise and nutrition journal can **double** a person's **weight loss** according to a study from **Kaiser Permanente's Center for Health Research**.

The findings, from one of the largest and longest running weight loss maintenance trials ever conducted, was published in the August issue of the **American Journal of Preventive Medicine**.

"The more food records people kept, the more weight they lost," said lead author **Jack Hollis Ph.D.**, a researcher at Kaiser Permanente's Center for Health Research in Portland, Oregon. "Those who kept daily food records lost twice as much weight as those who kept no records."

“IT SEEMS THAT THE SIMPLE ACT OF WRITING DOWN WHAT YOU EAT ENCOURAGES PEOPLE TO CONSUME FEWER CALORIES.”

After six months, the average weight loss among the nearly **1,700** participants was approximately **13 pounds**. More than two-thirds of the participants (69 percent) lost at least nine pounds, enough to reduce their health risks and qualify for the second phase of the study, which lasted 30 months and tested strategies for maintaining the weight loss.

"More than two-thirds of Americans are overweight or obese. If we all lost just nine pounds, like the majority of people in this study did, our nation would see vast **decreases in hypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease and stroke**," said study co-author **Victor Stevens, Ph.D.**, a Kaiser Permanente researcher. For example, in an earlier study Stevens found that losing as little as five pounds can reduce the risk of developing high blood pressure by **20 percent**.

The Kaiser Permanente Care Management Institute's Weight Management Initiative has recommended **maintaining an exercise and nutrition journal** as a strategy for losing weight since 2002. The Weight Management Initiative unites clinicians, researchers, insurers, and policymakers to identify practical, effective, non-surgical approaches for the prevention and treatment of overweight and obesity.

"Every day I hear patients say they can't lose weight. This study shows that most people can lose weight if they have the right tools and support. And food journaling in conjunction with a **weight management program or class** is the **ideal combination of tools and support**," says **Keith Bachman, MD**, a Weight Management Initiative member.

Funded by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute at the National Institutes of Health, the study is one of the few studies to recruit a large percentage of African Americans as study participants (44 percent). African Americans have a higher risk of conditions that are aggravated by being overweight, including diabetes and heart disease. In this study, the majority of African American participants lost at least nine pounds of weight, which is higher than in previous studies.

The study, coordinated by the Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research in Portland, also was conducted at Duke University Medical Center, Pennington Biomedical Research Center, and Johns Hopkins University. In addition to Hollis and Stevens, the Kaiser Permanente research team included William M. Vollmer, Ph.D.; Cristina M. Gullion, Ph.D.; Kristine Funk, M.S.; and Daniel Laferriere, MR. Other study co-authors included Phillip J. Brantley, Ph.D. and Catherine M. Champagne, Ph.D. at Pennington; Jamy D. Ard, MD, at the University of Alabama at Birmingham; Thomas P. Erlinger, MD, MPH, at the University of Texas; Lawrence J. Appel, M.D., and Arlene Dalcin at Johns Hopkins; Pao-Hwa Lin, Ph.D., and Laura P. Svetkey, MD, at Duke University; Carmen Samuel-Hodge, Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and Catherine M. Loria, Ph.D., at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute and National Institutes of Health.

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