

Healthy Futures

News + Views

An Educational Newsletter Covering Eating Disorder Treatment and Other Mental Health Issues

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Where fad diets fail, Healthy Futures succeeds

Let's say you're planning a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Australia. You jump online and find a Melbourne hotel website that promised a luxurious, ocean-view suite. Further, the website features testimonials from guests who rave about the amazing hotel.

You book a room!

After a 21-hour flight, you taxi to the hotel, step up to the registration desk and are told the hotel does not have a room for you. Further, you're told the hotel fails to provide rooms to roughly 98 percent of the people who reserve one.

Oh, and they're keeping your money.

Somewhere in the fine print, the hotel says, this was all spelled out.

Obviously you would be enraged.

Welcome to the diet industry.

With a failure rate at almost 100 percent, one would think the "weight-loss industry" would wither away, never to be heard from again. Yet their profits are huge and continue to grow. Consumers spent an estimated \$61 billion (yes, with



The latest fad in the diet industry? Eating like cavemen!

a "B") on pills, potions, plans and other gizmos advertising amazing results.

Healthy Futures team member and Registered Dietitian Kim Guenther says the diet industry's financial success relies on human nature.

"The idea of getting from point A to point B in the least painful manner is a lot of who we are as people," she says. The weight-loss industry, through millions of dollars in marketing and advertising, makes losing weight seem effortless – if you buy the product be-

ing advertised, that is.

Instead of pills, bars, meat-only plans, or other ridiculous gimmicks, Guenther says the best advice for anyone – whether trying to lose weight or not – is to become in tune with your own body.

"I tell my clients to just practice being," she says. "I'm helping them with being able to put aside all the things that come between them (whether positive or negative), and their plate of food."

Why diets fail

The weight-loss industry's massive failure rate

can be attributed to several factors. Most prevalent among them are: diets are unsustainable, and diets are "external management" of hunger, says Guenther.

The latest fad diet is called the Paleo Diet. Its practitioners promise healthy weight loss by only eating foods our primitive ancestors consumed some 500 million years ago.

The "plan" is questionable for dozens of reasons, but like other fad diets, virtually everyone who tries it eventually

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Our response to Boys Scouts on its banning policy

The Boys Scouts of America (BSA) recently announced that scouts and scout leaders with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 40 or higher would be banned from its annual Jamboree.

We at Healthy Futures add our voices to those of the National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) and the Binge Eating Disorder Association (BEDA) in asking Boy Scouts of America to reconsider this policy.

According to news stories, BSA defends this exclusionary policy as a way to encourage a “healthy lifestyle” among scouts and leaders.

As experts in the eating disorder field, we at Healthy Futures assure the BSA their new policy will have unintended, negative effects and we strongly urge a reconsideration of the exclusionary policy for these three reasons:

1. The policy centers on BMI – BMI never was intended to be the sole indicator of health and should not be used in that way. It is one small piece of a complex puzzle.
2. The policy encourages “crash dieting” and other unhealthy eating. Scouts and leaders should be made aware that weight loss, if necessary, is part of an overall healthy lifestyle and should be undertaken under medical and/or professional care.
3. The policy centers weight-loss motivation on shame. Overwhelming evidence shows using shame as a motivator can, at times, bring about short-term results, but in the long term can be extremely emotionally damaging.

We sincerely hope Boy Scouts of America reconsiders this exclusionary policy.

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will weigh more than when they began.

Simply put, consuming a cave man’s diet is unsustainable. No one can (or should) do it for the long term. (No one should do it short term, either, but that’s another issue.)

Guenther says another reason the diet industry is filled with failure is because fad diets place the management of hunger on something outside of the individual.

For example, someone practicing the Paleo Diet is relying on what are “good foods” or “bad foods,” rather than focusing inward and getting in touch with the body and what it needs.

“People should understand that the management of hunger can come from within when they’re present and mindful,” Guenther says.

Genuine help

This “mindfulness” approach is one of the cornerstones of Healthy Futures’ “Emotional Eaters Program.”

The program is designed specifically for those who struggle with binge eating or obesity. It gives them real, effective, sustainable techniques and strategies to make lifelong healthy changes.

Meeting two nights per week, Healthy Futures’ EEP offers amazing support,

with group and individual therapy from trained and licensed counselors, coaching, exercise support, DBT (dialectical behavioral therapy), “mindful meal” experiences, nutrition support and more.

The Healthy Futures team understands stopping binge eating and achieving healthy weight loss is not a simple issue of willpower, and that it’s a multi-faceted, complex issue combining medical, social, psychological, biological and chemical factors.

The overall goal is to help clients start a healthy and happy relationship with food.

To learn more about the Emotional Eaters Program, please call (480) 451-8500.

Healthy Futures is at 9449 N. 90th St., Suite 210, in Scottsdale, Ariz.

