

Media Release

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Lose weight in 2013 with the help of Weigh2Go

Cambridgeshire residents hoping to lose those excess festive pounds (and maybe a little more) are being encouraged to find out more about an NHS weight-loss service.

Weigh2Go is an individual weight loss programme for people living in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire and is run by the Nutrition and Dietetics team at Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust.

The programme, which is backed up by academic evidence, initially runs for 12 weeks, with ongoing support provided for up to 12 months, and the team believes it is one of the best initiatives available, which is delivered in the GP and community setting, shows good weight loss over the 12 month period and offers patients long-term pragmatic support.

The basis of the programme is individual weight loss advice and information and, since its inception in 2010 has seen some impressive results:

- 35.9% of participants achieved a weight loss of 5% or more at 3 months
- 5.6% of participants achieved a weight loss of 10% or more at 3 months
- 26.4% of participants dropped to a lower BMI category (for example obese to overweight, or overweight to healthy) at 3 months
- The programme has been particularly successful with men – 28.6% of participants are male, compared to just 10% of participants in commercial weight loss programmes

Losing just 5-10% of body weight has been shown to have a major impact on health, significantly reducing the likelihood of developing chronic illnesses such as diabetes, as well as helping to lower blood pressure, increase activity and relieve problems such as joint and back pain.

Helen Gibbs, principal dietician at Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust, said: "Losing 5-10% of body weight in the first 12 weeks is an achievable aim for many participants and can make a huge difference to their current and future health.

"We have a much lower drop-out rate than that seen in more commercial weight loss programmes, which many participants have already tried. The individual nature of the programme and the one to one sessions are what sets this programme apart – patients have

someone they can talk to about their issues regarding weight, food and activity and can receive tailored advice, all usually provided in their GP surgery.

“Obesity is an increasingly significant problem for the NHS and programmes such as Weigh2Go are essential to ensuring that we can help to prevent future illness. This programme has also helped to free up time to see those patients that need more specialised help.”

The Weigh2Go programme is delivered by a team of Weight Management Assistant Practitioners, supported by weight management dieticians.

Although the programme is only currently available in the Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire areas, the team would like to expand the service across the county.

Helen said: “Patients interested in the service can be referred by their GP. They must be over 18, have a Body Mass Index of 30, or 28 if they have other conditions such as diabetes, and be motivated to engage with the programme, which is measured at an initial assessment.”

Case study – Margaret Scarle

“I went in and said – don’t tell me I can never eat puddings, chocolate or cake again!”

Margaret Scarle, 66, lives in Willingham and joined the Weigh2Go programme in February 2011. Since then she has lost three and a half stones in weight and her BMI has fallen from 32.1, classified as obese, to 24.5, which is classified as a healthy weight.

She said: “I’ve tried many diets in the past and have been to some of the well-known weight loss groups, but I really didn’t like the group setting and getting weighed in front of other people.

“My son announced that he was getting married and then I knew that I would be on the wedding photographs! I would never willingly have my photograph taken and I thought to myself, this is my last chance, if I don’t do it now then I never will.

“I went into the first session and the first thing I said was – don’t tell me I can never eat puddings, chocolate or cake again! What I really wanted was a diet where I could eat normal food and I discussed the possible options with Lesley McFarlane, my weight management assistant practitioner. I decided to go for a counting plan, as I like to count up what I’m eating and know what’s going in!

“The plan was all about portions, it was roughly 1,500 calories a day, but it concentrates on portion sizes and types of food, for example you have to eat a number of portions of starchy carbohydrates, proteins and even fats every day. You then get an extra 200 calories which you can use for a treat or even save up, for example if you know you’re going out for a meal.

“I started by measuring everything and counting the calories but it soon became second nature to me, for example I can look at a sandwich and know how many different portions of different types of food it contains.

“I lost eight pounds in the first two weeks and after that I lost about two pounds a week and reached my target weight by November. My meetings with Lesley started at every two weeks, then monthly, then six months and a year.

“I now feel like I’m in control. All the way through I knew if I had any problems, Lesley was just at the end of the phone. We would talk about any problems or hiccups I’d had and how to solve them. Having that one to one relationship really helped – as I didn’t want to let her down!

“I’ve gone from size 18 trousers to size 12 and I don’t really think about my weight anymore, it’s about how I feel in my clothes. Losing the weight has made a huge difference to me, I’m off blood pressure tablets, my pulse has dropped and my cholesterol is now just slightly high so I’ve been taken off statins. I feel marvellous.

“This hasn’t been a diet, it hasn’t been about counting calories, it’s about changing the way I eat and think about food. I have lost weight on diets before, but I’ve never felt as good as I do now.”

- Ends -



Photo caption – Margaret Scarle, of Willingham, feels fantastic after losing three and a half stones in weight through Weigh2Go. (Also attached is a photograph of Margaret from several years ago, before she started the Weigh2Go programme.)

For further information contact the Trust’s Communications Team on:
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NOTES FOR EDITORS

- **Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust** became the first Community NHS Trust on 1st April 2010.
- **Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust** provides a range of integrated health and social care community services for children, older people and adults across Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, Luton and Suffolk. An extensive portfolio of services includes the following: Integrated health and social care services for adults and older people (district nursing, specialist nursing, community matrons, care management and domiciliary intermediate care services)

- Community rehabilitation i.e. physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy
- Diagnostic, outpatient clinics, minor injury units and inpatient rehabilitation units based in four Community Hospitals
- Children's acute services based on the Hinchingsbrooke Hospital site in Huntingdon
- A wide range of children's community-based services
- Clinic based services including Dental, Musculo-skeletal, and Podiatry
- Sexual Health Services
- HPV Programme

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