



## Help build culture of healthy living, eating

**My family has tried over and over again to eat healthier, be more active, and lose some extra pounds, but our efforts always seem to fizzle within a few weeks. We want to start again, and this time, make it stick. Any advice?**

If it helps, your experience is not unique. Part of the problem is that the environment we live in often undermines our best intentions.

The newly released "Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010," recognizes this phenomenon and calls for educators, communities, organizations, health professionals, businesses, policymakers and others to work together to shift our culture to one that more strongly supports healthy eating and physical activity.

Such a change won't happen overnight but could have profound impacts. Imagine if healthy, low-calorie foods received as much high-end marketing and advertising as chips, cake mixes, soft drinks and pizza. Imagine that everyone had easy, affordable access to fresh fruits and vegetables and whole-grain foods, as well as to fitness centers, parks and outdoor activities. Imagine if your social circle had just as much conversation about your progress in weightlifting or reaching goals on the treadmill as you do about what you watched on TV last night or what you saw on

Facebook. This is a huge cultural shift we're talking about, and it will take leadership and commitment from many sectors of society to make such a change. The dietary guidelines report, online at <http://www.dietaryguidelines.gov>, includes some concrete ideas for making this dream a reality and what individuals and organizations can do.

In the meantime, you might be inspired by findings from the National Weight Control Registry, which tracks more than 5,000 people who have lost a lot of weight and have kept it off for a significant amount of time. In fact, registry members have lost an average of 66 pounds and have kept it off for an average of 5.5 years. What seems to work for them? Here are a few commonalities:

- 98 percent modified their food intake, and 94 percent increased their physical activity (mostly walking). That may not seem surprising, but often people think they can do one or the other instead of both.
- 90 percent exercise about one hour per day on average.
- 78 percent eat breakfast daily.
- 75 percent weigh themselves at least once a week.
- 62 percent watch less than 10 hours of TV per week.

More information is on the weight control website, <http://www.nwcr.ws/>.

*Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or [filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu](mailto:filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu).*



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This column is the fifth and last in a series about the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which were released on Jan. 31, 2011.

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