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New program helps people get weight off and keep it off

By Bill Rea

Loosing weight is a problem for many people, and keeping it off is often a lot harder.

A Bolton doctor believes he has a solution, and tests he's conducted so far has shown promising results.

Dr. Saul Quint observed there are a lot of weight management programs out there. The difference with this program is it focuses on behavioural change.

He argued a lot of the weight management programs that are available aren't sustainable, and in a lot of cases, the weight comes right back on after the program is finished.

?You end up getting back to your old habits,? he said. ?You end up putting on the weight again.?

Quint said he's using a program from INTERVENT, a company that deals with lifestyle modifications or behavioural change, and is aimed at training health professionals in these techniques.

The process involves people looking at the biggest problem they want to solve. He said in terms of weight management, it's important that the person be ready to address that problem, because it doesn't make sense to push weight management before they're ready. He stressed it takes willingness to change one's behaviour, and the process targets one behaviour.

Quint said INTERVENT has been around about 20 years, and has been used to treat about two million people. He added there are more than 200 companies and hospital systems that use it, including some Fortune 10 and Fortune 500 corporations.

Narrowing the focus to weight management, Quint said they're adding in a medical meal replacement called OPTIFAST. A product of Nestlé, it's been used in hospital-based weight-loss programs, as well as in bariatric surgery clinics.

Quint said he started the program in Bolton in October, because that's where he practises.

The are three phases to the program, including the initial rapid weight loss, continued weight loss and maintaining it. Quint said people taught how to keep the weight off.

?You're supported all the way by medical professionals,? he said.

The first phase involves three meal replacements per day, along with dinner. It takes about six weeks, and in that time, a person can be expected to lose about 10 per cent of their body mass. The second phase is about eight weeks, and it involves one meal replacement and three meals per day. ?We tell you what you can and cannot eat,? Quint said, adding the person can expect to lose another five per cent of their body mass.The third phase consists of about 12 weeks, and it involves five visits with the doctor and another four with a dietician.

Since October, he said he's had patients losing a significant amount of weight; in some cases, 30 to 40 pounds

?Basically, everybody who has gone on the program has lost weight,? he said.

?We've had very little drop-off in terms of patients,? he added. ?They're sticking with it.?

Word of the program has been making its way through the community, largely through word of mouth, as people have been telling their friends and family.

The program is not covered by OHIP, but they are offering it at discounted rates. He added there have been more than 100 articles about INTERVENT in major medical journals to back its success, and it's been endoursed by the American College of Cardiologists. Its founder was Dr. Neil Gordon, a professor of medicine and past-chair of the American Heart Association Committee on Exercise, Cardiac Rehabilitation and Prevention.

Quint also said it's one of the very first scientific and evidence based weight loss programs.

Those who are interested in learning more about the program can call 1-888-700-9344.

