



Weekly Tip:

When it comes to activity, something is always better than nothing. If you are living a sedentary lifestyle and find it a challenge just to get off the couch to get your next snack from the kitchen—don't worry, there is hope for you yet! You don't need to join a gym or work out hours a day to make a difference in your life and health. All you need to do is...

SOMETHING!

Park your car at the back of the lot. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Meet a friend at the mall and spend the afternoon window shopping instead of watching TV.. Walk your child to school instead of driving them. You can even stand up and sit down 10 times before settling down on the couch or getting a snack. Or even sit on a stability ball instead of the couch! Every little bit will help, especially if you also replace that bag of chips with a celery stick! Every journey starts with a single step—what's yours?

It's simple, but not easy

Believe it or not, losing weight is a very simple thing. We all know what we should and shouldn't be doing. We all know that salad is better than cake and that Subway is better than McDonald's. It really is a very simple thing to get and stay healthy. The problem is that it isn't easy or everyone would do it!

No one gains weight overnight, no one develops a life-style related health condition in a day or two and yet so many people expect to reverse these things with just a week of healthy eating. It does not work that way and if it did, we would all be the picture of good health. If there were any magic wand, pill or diet that you could buy to fix , don't you think Oprah would have found it buy now?

I am not telling you anything that you already didn't know but I am also very aware that hope springs eternal. With every quick-fix diet ad, commercial or promotion we see, there is always that glimmer of hope that contradicts logic and reason that maybe this time, maybe this product or fad will be 'THE ONE' that makes all of our issues melt away overnight with very little effort. Believe it or not, I understand that desire, you aren't alone in your thinking—we all do it, even I do it. There are so many days that I want nothing more than to just wish on a star and have whatever issue I want gone, gone. Unfortunately life doesn't work that way, there are no magic potions and we have to actually work for what we want. I understand the frustration and if I did have a magic wand, I would

use it to take it away along with impatience and stubbornness on the part of every single person I meet who is dealing with a weight-related health issue. Without these burdens, they would willingly do the things that they need to, for as long as they need to. If there is anything stopping anyone from succeeding on the path to health are those three things.

I have often been heard to ask clients, 'How bad do you want it?' It is easy to say that you want to lose weight, it is easy to say that you want to be more active, it is easy to say that you are willing to replace your bad habits for good—but are you really? When push comes to shove are you really willing to throw out the box of chocolates you get for a gift? Choose the fruit plate instead of cake for dessert? Say no to the deep fryer? Before you say yes, yes, yes! Look at yourself in the mirror and say it to yourself 10 times, 'I am willing to do whatever it takes no matter how unpopular, uncomfortable or difficult it may be. A longer, stronger life is worth more to me than any amount of junk I can eat!' Then look yourself in the eye and say—I MEAN IT!

Great, that's the first and the easiest step. Like I said, the rest is simple but it will be one of the hardest things you have ever done. What you have to do is change your lifestyle, one day at a time. You will face temptation, frustration and anxiety. What you are doing is new to you. If it wasn't, you wouldn't be reading this would you? No one gains

excessive amounts of eight or body fat by eating right and exercising. We gain it because we aren't doing what we need to and I will be honest, the right things aren't nearly as much fun as the wrong things, but they are necessary. If they were fun, if a carrot stick tasted as good as a hot fudge sundae, we wouldn't need this conversation. It is hard to do the right thing, I get that but what you need to understand is that it is worth it.

There is no hot fudge sundae of bucket of chicken in the world that tastes as good as an extra 10 years with your loved ones will feel. There is no milkshake or chocolate bar that can take the place of a life without heart disease. There is no bag of chips with a flavor that can compare to not having to inject yourself with insulin everyday. There is no way to justify risking your health and even your life over something just because it is easier or tastes better. Explain that one to your children. Look in their faces and say, 'I am not going to be at your wedding because I would rather eat this Big Mac, sorry!' Of course you would never say that—but actions speak louder than words and when you choose to take the easy road. The road that requires the least amount of effort and refuse to do what you know you need to do because it is 'hard' - that is exactly what your actions are saying. That is exactly the choice you are making. When you complain about how hard it is to get off the couch and go for a walk or to the gym—think about how much harder it will be to say those words.

Recipe Corner

Delicious and nutritious snack and meal ideas that are perfect for the whole family!
Straight from Michelle's kitchen!



Hamburger Helper

This homemade version of a classic family comfort food is healthier and tastier than anything you can buy in a box! It is both kid and budget friendly! One of my family's favorites!

Cook 2 cups whole grain macaroni according to instructions (any pasta will do), mix in 1/2 cup milk and 1/2 cup shredded cheese and stir until melted. Set aside.

Brown 1lb of lean ground beef with a diced onion and a clove of fresh garlic in a sauce pan. Once browned, pour into metal strainer and run under hot water for a minute to remove excess fat (yes even lean beef has it) and return to pan.

Add chopped celery, peppers, zucchini or any other vegetables you have on hand - make sure they are diced or chopped fine. Add one can of tomato paste and stir well. Add a can of crushed tomatoes or tomato sauce, rinse cans with 1/2 cup water and add to pan. If using fresh, chop or blend 3 or 4 fresh tomatoes in a processor or blender and add in. Bring pot to a boil. Add oregano, basil and salt to taste. If your family likes spice—add red chilies or chili flakes.

Mix macaroni and sauce into a 9x13 pan or casserole dish. Top with 1 cup of shredded mozza or cheddar cheese (low fat is great) and bake at 350 degrees until cheese is brown and bubbly!

Is it in your genes, or in your jeans?

Every time I hear the excuse, 'It's genetics!' I literally want to scream. Seriously. Say it to me and see the look on my face. Is obesity hereditary?? No. Just like cancer, a family history of obesity will INCREASE YOUR CHANCES of becoming obese, but it doesn't mean you will be—just like it doesn't mean you will get cancer if your parents had it.

What is more hereditary than genetic obesity (or even cancer for that matter) is the lifestyles that lead to these disorders. The fact that your dad had lung cancer poses less risk to you than the pack of cigarettes you smoke every day. If your dad had cancer but you don't smoke, eat balanced diets, exercise regularly - your lifestyle will counteract any risk his disease poses on you. But if you choose to continue living what your learned watching him, continue to do what he did, well you just increased your chances. So if you are diagnosed with lung cancer—what is to blame, genetics? Or the fact that you did nothing about it?

Obesity is the same thing. The reason we see entire families battling obesity has more to do with the lifestyle of that family, the bad habits that parents share with their children than any genetic predisposition out there.

If a parent is obese, chances are that they are not eating a well-balanced healthy diet and participating in at least 150 minutes of aerobic activity a week, regularly. If the parents aren't doing what they need to do for themselves, what are the chances that they are teaching their children to live that way?

It never ceases to amaze me how many clients I get who are battling morbid obesity in their 20's and 30's who have never and still refuse to eat vegetables. Considering that most of us, including our children need a minimum of 5 servings of veggies a day that scares me. Their parents never made them, they never had to, they still can't eat them—and yet it is genetics that they blame their weight issues on. I would bet my paycheck that the problem didn't lie with our parents' genes but in their parenting.

Children learn what they live. If they watch you crinkle your nose at the thought of a salad and then grab a pizza—it doesn't matter that you tell them to eat their broccoli. If fresh vegetables are a foreign language in your house or you still buy white bread, they will never learn how to care for themselves - they will not learn to do what they need to do in order to counteract the risk of heredity.

As parents, it is our job to raise healthy, independent adults. It is not our job to be their friends and to only do the things they like, it is our job to do for them and for ourselves the unpopular things that they and we may not like. Using excuses like, 'it's genetic' while scarfing down a big mac doesn't make us healthier and it sure doesn't make us any less responsible for the state of our bodies and those of our children's. Our health, their health and all of our future's don't lay in our genes, they lay in our jeans and what we are willing to do or not to do in order to ensure a happy, healthy life for us all. There is no pre-determined destiny in this world, we have the ability to rise above our raising!