

Prepared meals and incentivized weight-loss program for obese and overweight women

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In another article being released early online, Cheryl L. Rock, Ph.D., R.D., from Moores UCSD Cancer Center, La Jolla, Calif., and colleagues, conducted a randomized controlled trial of weight loss and weight maintenance in 442 overweight or obese women (BMI, 25 – 40), ages 18 to 69, over a two year period with follow-up between November 2007 and April 2010.

The women were randomized into three intervention groups: in-person, center-based (167 women) or telephone based (164 women) weekly one-to-one [weight loss](#) counseling, including free-of-charge prepackaged prepared foods (from Jenny Craig, Inc.) and increased physical activity for 30 minutes a day, five days a week. The participants were eventually transitioned to a meal plan that was not based mainly on the commercial program. The third group was the usual care group (111 women) who received two individualized weight loss counseling sessions with a dietetics professional and monthly contacts. All participants were provided a small monetary compensation (\$25) for each completed clinic visit.

At 24 months, weight data were available for 407 of the 442 women (92.1 percent of the study sample). The average weight loss for the women participating in the center-based group was about 16 pounds or 7.9 percent of their initial weight, about 14 pounds or 6.8 percent for the telephone-based group, and about 4.5 pounds for the usual care control group. "By study end, more than half in either intervention group (62 percent of center-based [n=103] and 56 percent [n=91] of telephone-

based participants) had a weight loss of at least 5 percent compared with 29 percent (n=32) of usual care participants," the authors report.

"Findings from this study suggest that this incentivized structured weight loss program with free prepared meals can effectively promote weight loss compared with usual care group," the authors comment.

"Importantly, weight loss was largely maintained at two-year follow-up." They note that even small percentage weight changes can result in a reduction of risk for cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

In conclusion the authors write: "For clinical practitioners, the evidence suggests that the structured program as applied in this study provides another route for their overweight and obese patients to achieve and maintain weight loss through behavioral changes for at least a two-year period."

More information: JAMA.

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