

# Custom program helps people living with diabetes control blood sugar, weight

June 4 2022

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Study results from three clinical trial sites show that a WW International, Inc. ("WeightWatchers" or "WW") program tailored for people living with diabetes helped participants lose weight, lower blood glucose levels,

and improve their overall well-being.

"Despite recent advancements, there continue to be gaps in [diabetes management](#) for the over 37 million people in the U.S. living with [diabetes](#)—most of whom also have overweight or obesity," said John W. Apolzan, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Nutrition Scientist, Pennington Biomedical Research Center, and lead investigator in the clinical trial.

"These trial results show that the WW diabetes-tailored program produces favorable improvements in glycemic control, weight, and diabetes distress which are both statistically significant and clinically meaningful."

The study results were announced today at the American Diabetes Association (ADA) 82nd Scientific Sessions.

It is estimated that 90 percent of people living with diabetes are also living with overweight or obesity, and 30-53 percent of new diabetes cases in the U.S. yearly are linked to obesity. Current ADA treatment recommendations recognize the importance of weight management in patients with Type 2 diabetes who also have overweight or obesity to improve glycemic control.

The six-month single-arm clinical trial was conducted across three sites (Pennington Biomedical, University of Florida and Virginia Commonwealth University) and examined the effectiveness of the virtual WeightWatchers program on [glycemic control](#) and [weight loss](#) among 136 participants living with Type 2 diabetes who had an average baseline A1c of 7.9. Results demonstrated that the WeightWatchers diabetes-tailored program had clinically meaningful and statistically significant effects, including:

- Reduction in HbA<sub>1c</sub> by 0.76. Average decreases in participants' HbA<sub>1c</sub> levels at three and six months exceeded standards set by

the FDA for approval of pharmacotherapy (treatment with a medication).

- Average body weight loss of 5.7 percent and decrease in waist circumference by more than two inches. A modest weight loss of at least five percent of a person's [body weight](#) can help lead to [health benefits](#)—including improvements in [blood pressure](#), blood cholesterol and blood sugar.
- Decrease in diabetes distress by 9.8 percent. Participants experienced reduction in emotional burden, regimen-related stress and overall diabetes distress.

"Built on WeightWatchers' science-backed approach, our tailored program helps people living with diabetes build and maintain healthy habits based on their needs and lifestyle," said Gary Foster, Ph.D., Chief Scientific Officer, WW. "We remain committed to supporting people living with diabetes with scalable solutions and are encouraged by the positive clinical trial results presented at ADA."

"Pennington Biomedical's mission includes stemming the epidemics of obesity and diabetes, which can lead to a number of serious health issues, including heart and kidney disease. Finding solutions that help our residents live healthier lives by better managing [chronic conditions](#) like Type 2 diabetes is one of the research center's highest priorities," said Pennington Biomedical Executive Director John Kirwan, Ph.D.

Participants in the clinical trial followed WeightWatchers' new diabetes-tailored program. For more information, click [here](#).

**More information:** JOHN W. APOLZAN et al, 567-P: A Weight Management Program Tailored for Adults with Type 2 Diabetes: Effects on Glycemic Control, *Diabetes* (2022). [DOI: 10.2337/db22-567-P](https://doi.org/10.2337/db22-567-P)

Provided by Pennington Biomedical Research Center

Citation: Custom program helps people living with diabetes control blood sugar, weight (2022, June 4) retrieved 27 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-06-custom-people-diabetes-blood-sugar.html>

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