

Program participation results in long-term weight loss

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Researchers from the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus have found that losing even a modest amount of weight can reap significant rewards, including lower blood pressure, lower blood sugar, improved sleep, and fewer aches and pains.

But losing weight is difficult and maintaining that loss over years is even harder. The vast majority of those who lose [weight gain](#) it back. Yet research has found one group that has defied that trend.

A new study from the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, presented today at the 2016 Society of General Internal Medicine Annual Meeting, demonstrates the effectiveness of long-term participation in a national [weight-loss](#) program.

The investigators followed over 65,000 overweight or [obese people](#) who joined Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) between 2005 to 2010. In the first year, half of participants in the nonprofit weight-loss support group had significant weight loss. Of the patients with significant weight loss in the first year who participated in a second year, 80% kept off the weight. Each year, during years three to seven, roughly 90% of patients who continued participation in the program maintained their weight loss.

The researchers concluded that after one year of significant weight loss, consistent participation in the program helped participants sustain their new healthy weight.

"Maintaining long-term weight loss is a critical challenge in treating obesity and related health problems such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease," said the study's lead author Nia S. Mitchell, MD, MPH at CU Anschutz. "Just losing the weight isn't enough. Since the health benefits of weight loss disappear when weight creeps back on, we need more research into effective strategies for maintaining a healthier weight once it is reached."

Mitchell concluded that further studies of the TOPS program should examine which populations will succeed at weight loss and weight-loss maintenance and determine factors that can improve sustainable weight loss and maintenance.

Founded in 1948, TOPS is a nonprofit, noncommercial weight-loss support group with thousands of chapters across the United States and Canada. TOPS chapters provide support from others at weekly chapter meetings, healthy eating, regular exercise and wellness information at a fraction of the cost of commercial programs.

Provided by CU Anschutz Medical Campus

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