



News Release

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New Year, New You: Effective Weight Loss Strategies

Texas Tech Physician Shares Expert Advice on Sustainable Weight Loss

As the new year approaches, many set resolutions to improve their health and well-being. Weight loss is a common goal, but achieving and maintaining it can be challenging. Drew Payne, D.O., internal medicine, Texas Tech Physicians, offered insights into effective weight loss strategies.

“Every year during New Year's, people tend to focus on their weight,” Payne said. “I think that's a great opportunity for people to make changes in their lives.”

According to the World Health Organization, obesity rates have nearly tripled since 1975, with over 1.9 billion adults overweight and 650 million classified as obese. Obesity is determined by a Body Mass Index (BMI) above 30.

Multiple factors contribute to weight gain, including genetics, epigenetics, socioeconomic status, cultural influences and geographical location.

“Metabolic diseases, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure and hyperlipidemia are all associated with obesity,” Payne said. “It can also lead to arthritis and increase the risk of certain cancers.”

For individuals with a BMI above 40, or 35 and above with a comorbidity, bariatric surgery may be recommended. Additionally, GLP-1 medications can be effective for weight loss, helping individuals lose up to 15% of their body weight.

“These medications adjust the body's satiety and slow gut motility,” Payne said. “That allows individuals to consume fewer calories and lose weight significantly.”

The FDA has approved GLP-1 medications for those with and without diabetes, but individual risk factors may influence medication choices.

“All medications have potential side effects,” Payne said. “It's important to adjust existing medications to avoid adverse interactions when starting new treatments.”

Payne emphasized the importance of consulting with a primary care physician before starting any new medication or weight-loss program.

A common misstep in weight loss goals is attempting to out-exercise a poor diet. While physical activity is crucial, sustainable weight loss primarily relies on a balanced diet.

“Restrictive fad diets often lead to short-term results and long-term frustration,” Payne said. “Individuals should focus on making gradual, sustainable changes that can be incorporated into their daily lives, even on their worst days.”

Consistency is key, and it's important to remember that perfection isn't necessary. As long as individuals continue to progress and learn from setbacks, they can achieve their weight loss goals.

“It’s hard for people to stay motivated when they're doing something alone,” Payne said. “Find a group of people that can support you and see the changes that happen.”

Payne recommended that individuals focus on building a support system, whether it's with a health care provider, spouse or friend. This accountability can significantly contribute to long-term success.