What Is “Dieting” Really About?

- **WEIGHT CONTROL**—usually, loss, sometimes gain, often maintenance to counter the effects of aging
- **GOOD HEALTH**—eating right for optimum energy, strength, well-being, and long life
- **HEALTH PROBLEMS**—eating to prevent or correct illnesses such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, bone deterioration (osteoporosis), joint problems (arthritis)
- **APPEARANCE**—eating to become or stay attractive and youthful

All of these are long-term goals, not passing whims, that require a lifelong approach—not a temporary regimen you follow for a few days, months, or even years and then abandon in favor of your old habits. Replace the idea of dieting with a commitment to lifelong good habits. These habits should include not only what you eat, but also how you think about food, exercise, and your body.

The information contained in this brochure has been carefully reviewed for accuracy. It is not intended to replace the advice of your physician or health care provider.
Get REAL!

Time for a time out and say... I'll take A REALITY Check, Please!

Set Realistic Goals

While you're reshaping the idea of "dieting," you also need to reshape ideas about ideal weight and appearance. Instead of pursuing your goals on movie star and the scale, focus instead on what's right—healthy, realistic, possible, practical—for you.

➤ Very few of us CAN, OR SHOULD look like the tall, thin supermodels and action stars who often indicate our standards of beauty.
➤ But ALL of us CAN, AND SHOULD make an effort to achieve and maintain our personal best, in terms of not just weight, but also nutrition and physical condition.

Take an Inventory of Your Eating and Exercise Habits:

(what you eat, when you eat, why you eat; when, how, why you exercise—or don't).

➤ Don't trust claims that you can eat unlimited amounts of certain foods and completely eliminate others to lose weight or improve health. We thrive on a wide range of complex, compounded nutrients. Too much of any one—or too little of another—can lead to problems.

➤ Foods that are low-fat or fat-free, or sugar-free, can still be high in calories—particularly if you eat unlimited quantities—and low in essential nutrients.

➤ Fats are essential to health. Although many people don't need as much fat as they get, you need some—and certain types appear to be highly beneficial.

➤ Similarly, your body runs on sugars and carbohydrates. You can't and shouldn't try to cut them out completely, but you do want to choose them wisely. "Raw" sugar and simple sugar from fruit juice concentrates or honey is not necessarily better for you, more natural, or less fattening than ordinary refined white sugar. But sugars and starches contained in fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains bring a bonus of valuable complex nutrients, flavor, texture, fiber, and eating satisfaction.

➤ Whether you want to gain, lose, or maintain weight and good health, the object is not merely to count calories, but to make your calories count—choose foods that contain few vitamins, minerals, complex carbohydrates, protein, beneficial fats, or fiber.

Develop a Realistic Eating and Exercise Program for Yourself:

➤ Including a starter plan and long-term approach.

➤ Every journey begins with a single step. Start with modest changes and plan to keep improving and building as you progress.

➤ Remember that you are doing this for life—YOUR LIFE. Make plans and set goals that you can live with.

Now What? Take Action!

On Your Mark...

Ready, Get Set, and Enjoy The Payoff

Prophylactic subject is more confusing or contradictory than what constitutes recommended eating and exercise regimens for weight control. What you read or watch on TV may give you information, but often that information is not scientifically sound or even safe. And it seems that every day there's a new study that contradicts what was supposed to be true the day before.

So What Can You Do?

➤ Begin by checking with your doctor, particularly if you have any medical problems, are thinking of radically changing your eating habits, or you are not accustomed to the exercise you are considering.

➤ Your doctor may recommend that you consult a medical specialist for a specific condition you have, or suggest a nutritionist, dietician, exercise therapist, or weight loss or exercise programs in your area. You can also do research yourself; by looking in the phone book, talking to friends, contacting your local YMCA or other health clubs. Many companies and managed care plans also offer eating and exercise programs.

➤ Educate yourself. Read, attend seminars—but always try to maintain a balanced perspective. Is there solid clinical research to back claims? Beware of tantalizing reports of easy, phenomenal results, especially if they involve buying something. If it seems too astounding to be true, it probably is.

➤ Listen to your own body. You will never be able to stick with a plan that makes you feel tired, starved, ill, or uncomfortable—nor should you even try to. Eating foods you don't like (or that don't like you), banning foods you love, doing exercise you loathe, or that leaves you with aches and pains, will undermine your efforts and commitment. You need to find an approach that works for you.

➤ Don't be too hard on yourself. You don't need excuses—no one can be expected to maintain a healthy regimen flawlessly every day, all day, for the rest of their life. And you can't live in perpetual self-denial. Allow yourself to indulge in a high-fat favorite or slack off the exercise program once in a while—maybe even build such breaks into your plan. But always return to your program. It's consistency over the long-term that brings long-term results.

The Payoff

Once you stop thinking in terms of diet—artificial, unnatural eating practices—and start thinking in terms of healthy living—an integrated program of good eating, exercise and attitude—you'll probably find that the improvement in the way you look, and feel about yourself makes it easy to keep up the good work. You may also find that you now prefer your healthier eating patterns, look forward to your regular exercise activities, and don't miss the bad habits that used to run your life and take a toll on your well-being.