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HFYH: Weight Loss for the Quarantine 15

Most of us are familiar with the phrase the “Freshman 15” referencing weight gain that many college students experience their freshman year. This phrase references common weight gain during a period in life when young adults finish high school and start working or attending college. As with the many new challenges we have all experienced throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, you probably will not be surprised to learn we now have the “Quarantine 15”.

The Quarantine 15 references weight gain that many experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the pandemic, lockdowns and gym closures along with a more sedentary lifestyle has increased the likelihood of weight gain. Add to it the increased stress and anxiety we all faced and we were living through the perfect storm for weight gain.

Research from The University of California in San Francisco found that on average, participants in their study gained about 0.6 pounds every 10 days or 1.8 pounds per month during shelter-in-place orders. To learn more about their study, visit the [article](#) published in JAMA Network.

Now that we all have the Quarantine 15, what can we do about it? Here are some great tips to shed those pandemic pounds by reducing your stress levels.

Prioritize eating stress-fighting foods. With the pandemic came stress, which is often a contributor to weight gain. To combat stress, focus on stress-fighting foods including dark leafy greens, wild caught salmon, and foods with vitamin C, E and B5. The dark leafy greens help regulate cortisol, our primary stress hormone, and balance other stress hormones. Salmon provides protein to stabilize blood sugars, curbs cortisol production, and provides Omega 3 to help boost mood and emotional well-being. Add to this foods like oranges, apples, and carrots for more vitamin C, avocados, almonds, and asparagus for more vitamin E, and eggs, lentils, and split peas for extra vitamin B5.

Cut out the sugars and refined carbohydrates. Sugars lead to spikes in cortisol levels. Under stress, it is more common to reach for sugary foods which just further elevate those stress hormones that lead to more weight gain.

Eat larger meals early in the day. We all know that what we eat can help us shed a few pounds. But when we eat can help as well. Each time we eat, cortisol levels increase. So, if we can eat larger meals earlier in the day, it will help those cortisol levels return to normal for the remainder of the day and night.

Reduce stress through exercise. Try exercises that help to balance the stress hormones. While vigorous exercise can sometimes spike your stress hormones, exercises like yoga or other gentle, relaxing exercises can help to lower out-of-control stress hormones.

Connect with others. A great stress release tool is connecting with others. Meeting a friend at the park or other locations where you can still socially distance is a great way to get out and socialize. Regularly connecting with family and friends by phone, video calls, or through social media messages can help provide that connection and lower your stress hormones.



“It is important to maintain a healthy lifestyle,” said Kara Baker, RN, BSN, CDCES, Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist with the Health Care District of Palm Beach County’s C. L. Brumback Primary Care Clinics. “This includes eating healthy, balanced meals and being physically active three to five days a week. To stay motivated, plan your physical activity as part of your daily routine, choose activities that are fun and interest you or make it a family activity, such as going for a walk or bike ride after dinner. In addition to combatting the ‘Quarantine 15’, this healthy lifestyle will have a positive effect on your overall health and may help to prevent some health conditions such as Type 2 Diabetes.”

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Let's make a pact to de-stress and start shedding some of the Quarantine 15. We can all benefit from addressing some of the challenges triggered by the pandemic by eating better, exercising more, and connecting with others.

If you need a primary care provider, we welcome you and your family to make the Health Care District's C. L. Brumback Primary Care Clinics your medical home. Call 561-642-1000 to schedule an appointment at a clinic near you. Your C. L. Brumback Primary Care Clinics' provider will assess all of your health needs, including the COVID-19 vaccine if you have not already received it.

About the Health Care District

The Health Care District of Palm Beach County provides primary medical care, dental services and COVID-19 testing for adults and children at the C. L. Brumback Primary Care Clinics, health coverage programs for eligible uninsured residents, a pharmacy operation, a nationally-recognized Trauma System, registered nurses in nearly 170 public schools, short and long-term skilled nursing at the 5-star rated Edward J. Healey Rehabilitation and Nursing Center in Riviera Beach, and acute care at its teaching hospital, Lakeside Medical Center, which is accredited by The Joint Commission and serves the rural Glades' communities.

About the C. L. Brumback Primary Care Clinics

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