



## March 2008 Health Letter

### Achieving Your Ideal Weight

I need not tell you all the statistics: how many Americans are overweight, how many women are trying to lose weight or currently on a "diet." You've heard the numbers and repeating them here would be like pulling another fire alarm just when you had a moment of peace and quiet. Nor should I have to go into detail about the list of health problems associated with being overweight: heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, arthritis, many cancers, to say nothing of feeling tired, immobile, and dissatisfied with body appearance and clothing. You deserve a sense of hope that we can do something about this, and I'm here to share just that!

At Aiken-Augusta Holistic Health, a body-mind-spirit approach is the way we see the path toward weight control solutions just like any other health issue. So if you and I were sitting together in the office, we would discuss your readiness to take part in some daily physical activity and come to an agreement on how much, how often, and how long, and how we would measure your success. The fact that you may be discussing exercise with your doctor around weight issues should come as "standard," but what you may find refreshingly different would be the time we put into discovering what YOU believe would really work for you. This counseling regarding exercise behavior change can be carried out by an experienced physician, but also is very appropriate to address over several sessions of intense problem solving with a health psychologist such as [Dr. Sarah Shelton](#) in our office.

You also would not be surprised at all that we would want to talk about food choices for achieving healthy weight. What might surprise you is having a doctor who actually has taken courses in nutrition and studied the topic intensely for years and can advise you with dependable information. I will be attending the 5<sup>th</sup> annual [Nutrition and Health Conference](#) in Phoenix again next month to make sure I am up to date on the science of nutrition. I am excited to have that opportunity as part of my pledge to you to bring only excellence to the table in our discussions. But I also know that one conversation with a doctor on foods is usually not enough to achieve lasting changes. That's why I am delighted to announce that [Cynthia Catts, R.D.](#) is affiliating with our practice and starting to see patients at our North Augusta office in April! She has over 26 years of experience as a medical nutrition therapist, and is prepared to address weight as well as many other medical nutrition concerns.

You should also be aware of three other powerful tools we bring to the weight control arena, and that AAHH is the only medical office in our region with this approach. Acupuncture has been used successfully for weight control, and can work similarly to how it helps addicts reduce cravings for substances. [Laurie de Graaf](#) is already in quite a bit of demand for her excellent clinical skills, and you can expect she will be seeing more than a few patients for weight concerns this spring. Clinical hypnosis is another powerful approach to weight control, as outlined by my teacher Dr. Steve Gurgevich in his excellent book, *The Self-Hypnosis Diet*. I am currently able to provide a 6 session package of clinical [hypnosis for weight reduction](#) over 3 months, and offer a significant discount over what the sessions would run individually. This is work for which I am truly grateful, as patients often comment they can tell a shift in attitude and behavior around food within the first week. Finally, Health Coaching is a way to not only "know what to do, but to do what you know." [Gail Pendergrast](#) offers individual health coaching for people looking for a personalized approach with accountability for health behavior change. Gail also coordinates a group class, "Loving My Body and Experiencing the Ideal Weight for My Optimum Health." This workshop offers an unprecedented level of personal support and fun work together with others. It is an exploration of what can free us to achieve and maintain our optimum weight and to deepen our respect for our bodies as healing organisms. The discussions and work will center on the *mind body connection* with emphasis on foods that support healthy weight and exercise. Call and reserve your place in the next session to begin in June.

So, don't wait. As I have said on many occasions, if you don't have time for prevention now, how are you going to have time for disease later? Let us be of service to you, for whatever your needs are. We love what we do, and are ready to share that with you.

For health and healing,

Robert Pendergrast, M.D.

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