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Treating obesity with TLC

To prevent the metabolic syndrome or its evil big brother, diabetes, we have to keep fat off our bodies. Obesity will take its toll not only in a premature sudden death, as with a heart attack, but what is a fate worse than death -- having a stroke and not dying. I have seen many patients with this dismal condition where they are at the mercy of others for their most basic needs of eating, eliminating waste, and communicating. Some poor folks are left in a vegetative state with little or no animation.

Last week we discussed drugs helpful for weight loss. The four noradrenergic drugs are Diethylpropion (Tenuate®), Benzphetamine (Didrex®), Phendimetrazine (Prelu-2®)



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and the most commonly prescribed drug, Phentermine (Adipex®, Fastin®, Ionamin®). The generic Phentermine is what I prescribe most often since it is least expensive. It is somewhat effective, but by itself does not work. It needs to be coupled with a therapeutic lifestyle change that includes decreased caloric intake and increased exercise. These noradrenergic drugs are slightly addictive in that they make some people feel good and they can be abused. They work by not only decreasing the desire to eat, but increasing the desire to be more active while increasing the total amount of calories burned with exercise. I recommend taking the phentermine at 11 a.m. Because of the half-life of the drug it will last almost until bedtime and will decrease extra eating for supper and snacking afterward.

To a lesser extent, coffee, which contains caffeine, increases the metabolic burn, as does green tea, which contains EGCG, and the herb guarana, which contains guarine. This

has a more gradual onset and offset and tends not to cause as much nervousness and negative rebound as caffeine.

So, what should a person do? The answer is simple, yet difficult -- that is, eat less and exercise more. If that proves to be unsuccessful, turn to medication with a knowledgeable health care worker who will intensely monitor you. With a Therapeutic Lifestyle Change program, permanent weight-loss may be in your future. Locally, one can go to a fitness center, engage a consultant such as a personal trainer, and follow his/her advice. On the Internet, a person can go to a website like "Body for Life" (bodyforlife.com) and get lots of help and support. Within the next two months, "The Leanness Lifestyle" (leannesslifestyle.com) will have their website up and running and it may prove to be the best of all Internet help. We humans who cannot do it by ourselves (which is most of us), now have a way to lose it for good with TLC -- a Therapeutic Lifestyle Change.