

# health link

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## **CHALLENGE YOURSELF!** **Kick start the new year with a personal health challenge**

By Dr. Selene Wilkinson, ND

Whether it's for 7 days or 100 days, the new year is the perfect time to commit to a health challenge. You can choose to make slight changes in your diet and lifestyle during the challenge, or commit to a supervised cleanse or detox.

Ideal goals for a health challenge include the following:

### **DIET**

The foundation of everyone's health is their diet. Take this opportunity to look at your diet and see

where you can make changes. Below are things to try during your challenge:

- Start every morning with a drink of warm water (or room temperature) with a squeeze of fresh lemon in it
- Include fruits and/or veggies at every meal and snack
- Include a good amount of protein daily - 1 gram of protein per kg of body weight
- At least 20 grams of fibre daily
- Avoid coffee – drink green tea instead
- Avoid fried and fast foods
- Enjoy 8 glasses of water or herbal tea daily (dandelion root and ginger are good options)
- Avoid alcohol
- Decrease sugar intake
- No food for 2 hours before bedtime

See Challenge Yourself page 2



## **Is Your Weight in your Genes?**

By Mary Bamford,  
Registered Dietitian

### **Genetic Likelihood of Weight Gain**

Genes determine how your body works and responds to the environment. Some individuals exposed to lack of physical activity, high-fat diets, or stress will develop weight problems while others will not. In the extremes, some people stay slim and lean no matter what their lifestyle, while others gain weight with the smallest indulgence. Where do you fit in the spectrum of body responses to lifestyle?

### **Genetic Mutations Associated with Weight Gain and Obesity**

Genetic research has revealed specific mutations

within three genes that are associated with weight gain and obesity. Each mutation has a different influence on weight and weight gain. The three genes and their main effects are described below:

1. **FTO**: People with this genetic mutation require regular moderate and vigorous activity to manage their weight. It is estimated that 40-50 percent of people have this mutation. Moderate activity such as walking improves overall health in people with the FTO mutation, but vigorous activity is needed to lose weight.

2. **MC4R**: People with this genetic mutation manage their eating and weight better when they choose a lower fat diet. That means 25-30% of calories from fat, distributed evenly throughout the day. In people with this mutation, eating higher fat meals is associated with overeating and storing more body fat.

See Genes page 2

## Kick start the new year with a personal health challenge

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Try the following suggestions during your challenge and also avoid foods that you think you may have sensitivities to. Another good idea is to keep a diet diary to keep track of your dietary habits.

### EXERCISE

Get out and move! Do something you enjoy daily. Make sure you get your heart rate up and try to work up a sweat. Also include some stretching exercises or yoga every day.

### SUPPLEMENTS

- Take a multivitamin or a Green's drink daily to ensure adequate nutrients.
- Take 2000 IU of vitamin D total per day.

### LIFESTYLE

- Include some form of meditation (it can be just focusing on your breathing for 5 minutes before

bed), and/or deep breathing exercises daily.

- Get 7-8 hours of sleep each night.
- Get a massage. Massages help move toxins through the body via the lymphatic system and they are a great stress reliever.
- See the glass half full. Be positive, enjoy this challenge and focus on the things in your life that you are grateful for.

Do the best you can with this health challenge and don't give up if you slip up along the way. Studies show if you commit with another person or program such as the Adelaide Club's "100 Day Challenge" you are more likely to reach your goals.

If you would like additional guidance with your challenge or you would like to do a detox that addresses your particular concerns contact Dr. Selene Wilkinson at the Adelaide Health Clinic 416-367-5200. ■

## Is Your Weight in your Genes?

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3. DRD2: People with this genetic mutation tend to have overeating behaviours because the pleasure of food and eating does not register properly. They overeat because they crave more pleasure. Stress tends to increase the overeating behaviours. There are many stress management and behaviour change strategies that can help manage this pleasure center disconnect.

### Let your genes work for you

If you recognize any of these challenges in your own weight management, you can target your efforts to maximize your response. If you would like some help, the experts at Adelaide Club and Health Clinic offer several options to help you safely increase your exercise, improve your diet and manage stress. ■

### DNA, Genes and Genetic Mutations Explained

Each cell in the human body contains an individual's genetic code. The genetic code is encoded in a molecule called DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid). The genetic code is made up of an alphabet of 4 letters: A, C, G and T. The DNA in each of the cells contains a sequence of 3 billion of these letters divided into 23 pairs of chromosomes. This sequence is unique to each individual and constitutes his/her genetic code. Genes are words of different length located at specific places within this sequence of DNA; proteins are molecules encoded by genes. It is estimated that there are approximately 25,000 protein-coding genes in our human DNA. Each individual has inherited two copies of each gene: one from the father and one from the mother. The two letter codes at specific locations along the DNA sequence constitute the individual's genotype. Due to several misspellings that occur during our evolution, there are different versions of each gene within populations. These spelling errors are called mutations. Some mutations are associated with obesity and weight gain.