

A New Approach to Weight Loss

Eden Life

Obesity is a growing concern in the 21st Century, and many of us are looking for a way to manage our weight. Eden Life is a Weight Loss Clinic with a difference, tailor-making weight loss programmes to suit individuals.

Running a business, moving up the career ladder, and juggling business travel and social engagements leaves very little time to focus on eating well and hitting the gym. It's the sandwich loaded with mayonnaise on the run, the cup after cup of caffeine to keep going, the regular work drinks and late night restaurant dinners that are the only constant from week to week. Before you know it, stress, poor diet and lack of exercise has taken its toll and the weight starts piling on.

There is currently a global focus on good health and wellbeing, particularly because this is no longer a given. Instead, it is something we all strive for within the hectic pace of our lives. Nations are getting fatter. In a recent study, The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine estimated that the adult human population weighs 287 million tons; 15 million of this figure can be attributed to people who are overweight and 3.5 million to people who are obese.

Professor Ian Roberts, who was in charge of the study, clarified in the media that we are not necessarily eating more than we were 50 years ago, but we are moving less because of machines and technology. However, humans are biologically programmed to eat to create energy for movement, so this needs to be burnt off in one way or another.

The diet industry continues to boom, continually churning out new potions and programmes for weight loss. It feeds into the hopes of millions who battle with their weight, but statistics show that only one in 100 people on weight loss programmes succeed, and only one in 1,000 keep the weight off. The underlying problem is the one-size-fits-all approach of diets, because no two people are the same.

Local pharmacist Paula Galvão was overweight as a child and weighed 113 kg at the age of 25. She decided to study pharmacy to find a solution and a "way out". After many years of research into how food can be used as medicine, and mixing various ingredients to see if she could discover the right combination to help her lose weight, Paula lost 50 kg in eight months. Today she runs a successful weight loss clinic called Eden Life, which is registered with the South African Pharmacy Council.

Her approach to weight loss is to treat each person as an individual. She believes that people are overweight because of biochemical imbalances in the brain which make them overeat but never feel full, or they store every morsel they eat as fat. In the worst





case scenario, it is a combination of the two factors. "Fat people are often criticised for their lack of willpower, but this is absolute nonsense," she says. "Biochemical imbalances are the problem and you need to correct them. Until you do, no eating plan will help."

These biochemicals include leptin, which regulates the burning of energy, and insulin, which regulates blood sugar. Imbalances can be caused by a number of factors, such as stress, genetics and hormonal problems. "As we age, our hormones become unbalanced and this is why we pick up weight," says Paula. "Another problem that develops as we age is insulin resistance, a blood sugar disorder. It causes carbohydrate cravings and increases fat storage." Insulin resistance is also caused by an unhealthy lifestyle and Paula says 90% of people who are overweight are insulin resistant.

Interestingly, her programme does not recommend a fat-free diet, which is so popular. Often, the fat which is lacking in food is replaced by refined sugar. Instead her eating plan encourages a moderately high protein intake and low fat choices, because certain good fats are essential to the functioning of the brain.

Traditional medical thinking is that diets moderately high in protein raise cholesterol. Not so, says Paula. "Eating correctly can enhance your growth

hormone levels, which break down cholesterol. In addition, combining meals correctly triggers the release of the fat-burning hormone glucagon."

Paula's clientele include a number of celebrities, such as Miss South Africa finalist and TV personality Sandy Ngema, *Isidingo* actors Tumisho Masha (Modise Tladi) and Robert Whitehead (Barker Heynes), consumer journalist Isabel Jones and singer PJ Powers. For all of them their weight loss has been significant, but they have also gained back their health and quality of life. Robert Whitehead, for example – who lost 31 kg, 150 cm and 28% body fat in ten months – went from being a borderline Type 2 diabetic with fatty liver disease and high cholesterol to completely normal blood test results.

"Obesity management is actually nothing new," Paula says. "All we do at Eden Life is create the correct environment for weight loss. The rest happens quickly and easily." *

... Celebrities Tumisho Masha (first page), Robert Whitehead (top left) and PJ Powers (top right) have all experienced great weight loss success at Eden Life

Bottom Right: Local pharmacist Paula Galvão advocates individualised weight loss programmes at her clinic Eden Life

