

UW Health: Study looks to help with quarantine 15 weight management

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MADISON, Wis. - Could your significant other help you lose the weight you have gained during the COVID-19 quarantine? A study at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health is looking to answer that question.

The study is called Partner2Lose and it is actively recruiting participants to test whether involving a person's significant other in their weight loss helps or hinders the process.

Whether people are working from home, essential workers on the frontlines, at home more because they are in a high-risk group, unemployed or caring for relatives, many people are eating more and exercising less since the pandemic began. This could stem from limited access to a gym, stress or decreased free time. UW Health physicians and researchers are concerned about the potential consequences. Significant weight gain increases the risk of health problems such as cardiovascular disease and Type 2 diabetes.

It is clear that many people want to do something to improve diet and exercise during these challenging times. For example, more than 50 Facebook groups with titles like "Beat Quarantine 15" and "Quarantine Lean" have been formed over the last few months.

"People are clearly worried about the effects of the safer-at-home orders. I worry the people who have gained weight are going to take risky paths to try to lose it or try things that just don't work in the long run," said Dr. Corrine Voils, professor of surgery at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health, and study lead. "Studies have demonstrated that several options are safe and effective for long-term weight loss including a healthy diet and increased exercise. These strategies are part of the

Partner2Lose study.”

Study participants will be randomized to participate in the weight loss study (which is composed of classes and personal consultations with a nutritionist) either alone or with their partner. This means everyone who signs up has to have a partner, but they will then be randomly assigned to either participate alone or with their partner. The patient-only group learns a curriculum about weight loss. The partner group learns weight loss and communication skills.

“This program uses evidence-based strategies to promote weight loss for people who are overweight. An added perk is that it may help home relationships and communication skills during the COVID-19 era when we are spending a lot of time with our significant others,” said Dr. Voils.

The study is enrolling through August 31, 2020. Those who are interested can go to Partner2Lose.com to fill out an online screening form and see if they qualify.