

Michael van Straten's Bodytalk on Classic Gold

WITH

GOLDSHIELD HEALTHCARE

BATTLE OF THE BULGE

You've eaten all the hot cross buns, Easter eggs and chocolate bunnies; May Day's been and gone and another Bank Holiday is just around the corner. Now it's time to worry about all those extra pounds and the coming summer holidays. You step out of the shower and look in the mirror and suddenly there are love handles that weren't there last week. Your partner's six pack has dissolved into a quivering mass of beer belly and then you panic. Which diet shall we try – you've had a go at most of them.

Everyone knows that the only sensible way to lose weight is to eat a few calories less and burn up a few calories more. Less food and more exercise, it's as simple as that. So why do so many of us fail miserably when it comes to a sensible lifestyle when we know it's the only long term solution. In spite of that knowledge, everyone's a sucker when it comes to magic pills and potions that help you shed the pounds.

Do they work; are they a waste of money; is there any risk? Here's the Classic Gold guide to the ones I think are worth trying. Whatever you do, remember that none of them will work on their own, you have to make an effort too. Sadly, no matter how much good information the public gets about food and health, the messages seem to get garbled on the journey from the givers to the receivers. Just to illustrate how advice is misinterpreted, here's a story about Garbology.

Garbology is a new science which can show us how little people understand about government-inspired healthy eating messages. American archaeologists have recently started to study garbage tips, and by using core extractors they take samples from infill sites all around the US, which they can date very accurately from layers of newspaper. When the US Government recommended a reduction of animal fat to avoid bowel cancer, the garbage tips overflowed with all the fat that had been cut off bacon, steaks, and joints. But within weeks the garbologists were

finding a dramatic increase in wrappers from processed meat products like salamis, sausages and bologna.

The next Government advice to protect against cancer was ‘eat more green vegetables’ and supermarket sales boomed. Unfortunately much more was sold than eaten and the garbologists found tons of uncooked, uneaten green vegetables in the garbage tips. There’s no point in buying it unless you eat it.

However, there are some natural supplements that can make a big difference. They’re not a substitute for sensible eating but in various ways they can help, whether it’s through making you feel fuller so you don’t crave so much food; improving the way your body deals with fats so you get rid of more and store less; or even by giving a bit of a boost to your metabolism so you burn more calories.

CLA – Conjugated Linoleic Acid

Sara is 47 and three children and a dramatic change in lifestyle piled on the pounds. There was no time for exercise, she tried every new diet that came out and ended up as a depressed, overweight, yoyo dieter. “I was never overweight before the children” she says “but I was very sporty playing squash, swimming and running. Getting to 3 stone overweight was absolute hell and years of weight loss clubs, terrible diets and spending a fortune on special meals, special foods and meal replacements was all a waste of money. Discovering CLA has made a big difference as it helped me stick to sensible eating without feeling hungry. I even had the confidence to go back to the gym and in all I lost almost a stone and a half in 12 weeks. A month after stopping the pills I’m back on the squash court, going to the gym twice a week and the weight is still falling gradually. I eat well but the cravings for chocolate, crisps and sweets have really stopped.”

Well, that’s a story that makes me feel really happy and hopefully gives you some encouragement. BMI is a great way of understanding your body’s weight/height ratio. The ideal number should be between 20 and 25, 25-30 is overweight, 30-35 moderately obese, 35+ seriously obese. Below 20 is too thin. Check your own at www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Before starting the CLA tablets Sara was 5f5i, weighed 12st7lb, with a BMI of 30. After losing 20lb her BMI was down to 25.5. So she’s now within a couple of biscuits of the healthy weight range.

CLA is a special fat important for cholesterol and the proportions of fat and protein in the body. Found in beef, cattle can only manufacture CLA when grass fed. Unless you eat free range or organic beef you won’t get much.

Sara stuck with healthy eating, having cereal or fruit and yogurt for breakfast; more fruit mid-morning; sandwich or soup and a roll for lunch at home; jacket potato with beans at work. In the evening, chicken with salad and veg, spag bol and

the occasional Chinese. She drinks lots of water, a little tea and coffee and no alcohol.

Zotrim

This is one of the few products with any scientific evidence. A clinical trial last year showed a gradual weight loss over 45 days that was maintained even after stopping the pills. One of the country's leading medical dieticians, Dr. Carrie Ruxton, has been involved in a number of published studies showing two inch waist reduction after four weeks, and a 4 lb weight loss in the same four weeks. Interestingly, 12 months after reaching their target weight, the Zotrim dieters had lost on average another pound, when most dieters would have gained back the lost weight plus some.

Zotrim helps you feel full after less food than normal thanks to the three traditional South American herbs - Guarana, Yerba Mate and Damiana. Together they slow the rate at which the stomach empties, making you feel fuller long after you've eaten and much less likely to snack between meals.

Phase 2

This is a revolutionary new food supplement that can encourage weight loss. Made from white kidney beans it neutralises some calories from starchy foods by blocking enzyme activity. It won't reduce essential fatty acids and it's neither laxative or diuretic. Of course you can't take the pills and stuff yourself with twice as much bread, pasta, potatoes and rice as normal and expect to lose weight. But, using Phase 2 as part of a diet providing sensible calorie input means that you should lose more weight than you would eating the same amount of food without taking the white kidney bean extract.

Sniff yourself thin with Crave Control

These patches of powerful aromas saturate your sense of smell and stop cravings for chocolate and sweet stuff. You stick a patch on the inside of your wrist and sniff every time you fancy another chunk. A trial at St. Georges Hospital, London, showed that volunteers using the patches ate far less chocolate than those with the placebo. You don't absorb the chemicals through your skin so Crave Control is safe to use in conjunction with other medications. If you don't eat chocolate anyway there won't be a reduction in your calorie consumption and you won't lose weight. There is nothing in the patches that triggers weight loss on its own.

Lecithin

Lecithin is a naturally occurring fatty substance and one of the most important groups of phospholipids which is a transporter of choline. Choline works just like a

vitamin and is vital for normal liver and brain functions, as well as being vital for keeping a healthy balance of fats in the blood stream. Lecithin is an essential ingredient of bile and is required for the breakdown, elimination and absorption of other fat cells.

It does occur naturally in liver, peanuts, soya beans, wheatgerm and is often found added to products like mayonnaise and salad dressings. Using lecithin supplements with a healthy diet improves the way your body deals with fats and makes weight loss easier when used in combination with a calorie controlled eating plan.

Cellutrim

Cellutrim is an interesting mixture of natural substances including ginkgo biloba – to improve blood flow; grape seed for extra vitamin E; kelp for iodine that boosts metabolism; fish oil and evening primrose oil for natural anti-inflammatories. This mixture will help to improve the overall metabolism and breakdown of fatty tissue – and cellulite is just fat. If you want to change the shape that you are then you have to eat less and exercise a great deal more.

RED FLAGS

The American Government suggests red flags for bogus weight loss claims, especially “lose 2 lbs a week or more without dieting”; “eat as much as you like and lose weight”; “use this product for permanent weight loss”; “pills that block fat or calories and cause substantial weight loss”; “any diet patches, creams or wraps that cause substantial weight loss”.

Slimming patches that include seaweed. Any slimming product with seaweed may over-stimulate your thyroid which can lead to health problems. There’s no evidence of how much of this product is absorbed through the skin, no published trials and I think it’s highly unlikely that it will work.

Slimming and detoxing liquids which contain things to burn calories, get rid of the toxins, purify the body and help to tone. Also Day and Night capsules that, combined with the liquid, or on their own for slimming, produce immediate intense elimination, cleansing, purifying and toning during the day; the night capsule has slimming action while you sleep and also contains ‘de-bloat’ and ‘fat flush’ – whatever they are.

Fat Magnet, Fat Blocker, Fat Trapper or any other product containing chitosan which scientific studies have shown makes no difference to cholesterol or weight.

Algae – the false claims and hype that surround many of the algae containing products are, according to the American Government, bunkum. There’s no evidence, they say, that spirulina or any other algae is effective as an appetite suppressant.

Here are a few more home truths that you may not like and that the unethical pill pushers certainly won't like.

Nothing you rub on the surface dissolves fat.

Sticking magnets on your acupuncture points won't help you lose weight.

Some products may bind to tiny amounts of fat but you'll need to take £20 worth for every burger.

Water tablets (diuretics), colon cleansers (laxatives) can get rid of several pounds a day, but this is not removing fat.

Cleansing and removing toxins is something the body does very well for itself and excessive use of diuretics and laxatives is dangerous.

Fancy a body wrap? Yes you could lose ten inches in a couple of hours but they'll measure you in 30 different places, quarter of an inch off each ankle, half an inch off each thigh, an inch off the hips, quarter inch off each arm. But it's only water – one glass and it's all come back.

When it comes to choosing a diet there's only one thing that matters. Could you possibly stick to it for the rest of your life, be happy with it, enjoy it and get all the nutrients your body needs. No matter which of the bonkers diet doctors books you read, the Stone Age, Blood Type, Brighton Beach, Metabolic, Food Combining, High Protein, Low Carb, Fat Free, Dairy Free, Gluten Free, Fun Free and finally Food Free diets, the common factor is always the same – fewer calories, more exercise, and that's all you need to know.

For a selection of sensible eating plans that make the perfect partners for your weight loss supplements and willpower as well as a Desperation Diet for short term use only, you can make your own choice absolutely free at www.michaelvanstraten.com and just click on 'diets'.

For products and more information see www.goldshield.co.uk

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