

HALEY K. MCGUFFIN and GREG E. POPOVICH, Dept of Exercise Science and Athletic Training, West Virginia Wesleyan College, Buckhannon, WV, 26201. Losing 100 pounds: case-study analysis of the implementation of hypercaloric “cheat” meals to facilitate progressive weight loss.

Many weight-loss strategies employ the use of systematic refeeding, commonly referred to as “cheat” meals. This approach may be used to prevent stagnation or to re-initiate weight loss once a plateau has been reached. It is believed that cheat meals improve adherence and maintain metabolic rate. The purpose of this case study was to determine the effect of cheat meals on prolonged weight loss while avoiding stagnation on a hypocaloric diet. The subject was a 38-year-old sedentary female weighing 300 lbs at a height of 5’2”, with an unremarkable medical history. We compared average weekly weight loss with the weight loss experienced after consuming cheat meals. She lost an average of 2.38 pounds per week and a total of 117.9 pounds in 74 weeks. The weeks when she followed the guidelines of her diet but did not observe meaningful loss were interpreted as reaching a sticking point. In this instance, she would implement a cheat meal to re-initiate progress. A common cheat meal consisted of primarily an increase in carbohydrates above her recommended 1,000-1,245 daily calorie intake. Hypercaloric meals cause an acute but transient increase in body weight in the following days. During the next 3-4 days after the refeeding, she frequently experienced a new low in body weight. Preliminary results indicate that cheat meals continued the weight loss trend by permitting adherence and presumably maintaining metabolic rate.