Cash rewards help people lose weight

11ᵗʰ March, 2013

Nutritionists and dieting experts have long sought the answer to how to encourage people to lose weight. It seems overweight people are more interested in the size of their wallets than their waistlines. Researchers in the USA may have found one answer – cash rewards and penalties. A year-long study of 100 weight watchers by the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota found a system of financial incentives and fines had a significant impact on people's success in shedding kilos. The weight-conscious dieters received $20 a month if they met their weight loss goals and had to pay a penalty if they didn't. Those motivated by financial gain lost an average of 4.1kg, compared to just 1kg for those without the cash bonus.

The study followed 100 obese adults aged between 18 to 63, who were weighed every month for a year. They were put into four groups, some with a monetary focus, others with an emphasis on education and behaviour change. The $20 a month was enough for the financially-motivated dieters to out-diet the other groups. Mayo Clinic's Dr Donald Hensrud said: "Just wanting to lose weight isn't enough. Financial incentives can be powerful." Head researcher Dr Steven Driver found the fear of losing money was stronger than the thought of receiving a bonus. He said: "Fear of losing money tends to motivate people about two and a half times more than the prospect of gaining the same amount of money."

Sources: *BusinessWeek.com / HealthDay.com*

Writing

People will become more and more obese and no diet or scheme will reduce this. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

nutritionists / dieting / encourage people / incentives / impact / motivated / cash bonus / obese / emphasis / education / behaviour change / powerful / fear / losing money

True / False

a) Food experts have found the answer to obesity. T / F

b) A study looked at the weight of 100 people over a year-long period. T / F

c) People had to pay $20 a month if they failed to meet weight-loss goals. T / F

d) Cash bonuses helped overweight people lose 4 times more weight. T / F

e) The weight watchers had their weight checked 52 times over the year. T / F

f) People who lost the most weight received up to $200 a month. T / F

g) A doctor said there wasn't enough motivation in only losing weight. T / F

h) Another doctor said the idea of losing money motivated participants. T / F

Synonym Match

1.	experts	a.	put on
2	encourage	b.	overweight
3.	incentives	c.	possibility
4.	shedding	d.	specialists
5.	gain	e.	motivate
6.	obese	f.	slim down
7.	focus	g.	losing
8.	lose weight	h.	reward
9.	bonus	i.	reasons
10.	prospect	j.	emphasis

Discussion – Student A

a) Are there any dangers in dieting?

b) Are dietary habits changing in your country?

c) Why can't people stick to diets?

d) Is it possible to lose weight without exercising, and still enjoy food?

e) What do you think of all the fad diets that come out?

f) Which is stronger – the fear of losing money or the thought of a bonus?

g) What questions would you like to ask a dieting expert?

h) What do you think the answers to those questions might be?

Phrase Match

1. dieting experts have long
2. more interested in the size of their wallets
3. a system of financial
4. a significant impact on
5. Those motivated by financial gain lost
6. obese
7. an emphasis
8. incentives
9. the fear of losing
10. the prospect of gaining

a. an average of 4.1kg
b. people's success
c. money was stronger
d. adults
e. the same amount
f. than their waistlines
g. can be powerful
h. sought the answer
i. on education
j. incentives and fines

Discussion – Student B

a) What do you think is the best way to lose weight?
b) What do you think of the idea of getting cash to lose weight?
c) Are you more interested in the size of your wallet or waistline?
d) How happy are you with your weight, shape, size, etc.?
e) Should governments pay people to diet to save healthcare costs?
f) What's the difference between a diet, diet and to diet?
g) How healthy is the food you eat?
h) What should schools teach kids about healthy diets and weight?

Spelling

1. niusnittsorit and dieting experts
2. nereuoagc people to lose weight
3. cash rewards and pienstela
4. ifcanlina incentives
5. The weight-iocssoucn dieters
6. lost an eergvaa of 4.1kg
7. 100 besoe adults
8. a oyamrent focus
9. cflaiyainln-motivated dieters
10. Head rreaesrche
11. niicgeevr a bonus
12. the optcrpse of gaining the same amount

Role Play

Diet expert A - You think the best way to lose weight is to be totally vegetarian. No eggs, fish or dairy products. Tell the others three reasons why. Whatever they say, tell them they are wrong (and tell them why they are wrong).

Diet expert B - You think the best way to lose weight is to exercise for 2 hours every day. Tell the others three reasons why. You think 2 hours of exercise means they can eat anything they want. Whatever the others say, tell them they are wrong (and tell them why they are wrong).

Diet expert C - You think the best way to lose weight is to fast every other day and drink only water on the fasting days. Tell the others three reasons why. Whatever the others say, tell them they are wrong (and tell them why they are wrong).

Diet expert D - You think the best way to lose weight is to have surgery to make your stomach smaller. Tell the others three reasons why. Whatever the others say, tell them they are wrong (and tell them why they are wrong).

Speaking - $?

How much would you need a month to do these things? Change partners often and share what you decided.

- stick to a diet
- give up chocolate
- self-improvement
- read 10 books
- be nice to people you dislike
- pick up all the litter you see
- study English 5 hours a day
- stop a bad habit

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	F	d	T	e	F	f	F	g	T	h	T

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.

Answers – Synonym Match

1. d	2. e	3. i	4. g	5. a
6. b	7. j	8. f	9. h	10. c