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Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

Thank you for the tip a year ago in the Winter 2010 issue of *ADA Times* regarding the on-line weight loss website, LoseltorLoselt.com. I decided to put it to the test and have lost 17 pounds since October. Being a registered dietitian, I have the knowledge [about diet and nutrition], but this site provided me with the motivation. It has cost me very little and the benefits have been priceless!

Marcia Whitaker, RD, CSR, CD
Salt Lake City, Utah



I just wanted to let you know that I enjoy reading *ADA Times* from cover to cover. I couldn't be more thrilled that you continue to incorporate food, food knowledge, food safety, culinary arts and the importance of learning and understanding that the origins of our profession begin with food. I read with interest the "Shopping for Savings" article in the Winter *ADA Times*. I shop at all kinds of stores—my own employer The Co-op Food Stores, but also at dollar stores and discount food stores—so I can see what is available and speak with authority on how to save money on groceries in my community. Thanks for an excellent discussion of these important resources!

Mary Saucier Choate, MS, RD, LD
Hanover, N.H.

This e-mail is long overdue, but I am writing in response to "Creating Our Competition" on the dietetics internship shortage (Winter 2010 issue). I applaud you for publishing such an eye-opening article. I have a bachelor's degree in human nutrition and I hope to become a RD. However, for someone like me and, I believe, many others—especially married women with dependent children—balancing one's family and education can be physically and mentally draining. I am thinking of pursuing a master's degree because I do not want to waste time [if there are not enough internships]. There should be some flexibility in these supervised practice requirements. Many people love the dietetics profession, but if there is no way around the shortage, then we are already at a great loss.

Anonymous

While I enjoy *ADA Times*, I was not happy to see a cover full of beer. It is true that there are some redeeming health benefits to some beverages that also contain alcohol, but many or most of them can be found in non-alcoholic beverages as well. Since alcohol is a toxin and alcohol abuse and alcoholism are devastating problems, perhaps our public displays could discourage, rather than encourage, its consumption.

Kristine Westover, MS, RD, LD
Salem, Ore.

I appreciated "Shopping for Savings" as a reminder to stay in touch with where our clients purchase food and how to help them make healthy choices wherever they shop. However, I was shocked to see the photo of a young girl happily juggling five boxes of highly sugared and processed cereals in an aisle of soda and more sugared cereals. I thought surely it was an illustration of the potential pitfalls of shopping at discount grocery stores and I'm baffled that *ADA Times* would include it.

Heidi Turner, MS, RD
Seattle, Wash.

The Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education, ADA's Alternate Supervised Pathways Task Force and the Commission on Dietetic Registration are currently exploring additional routes for supervised practice, and *ADA Times* will continue providing updates. "However," says CADE director Ulric Chung, PhD, "many internship programs already accommodate the needs of their students, so I would recommend speaking to directors and asking about options."

Meanwhile, data from the April 2011 internship match shows an increase in matches (to 52 percent), despite an increase in the number of applicants. In addition, the number of students who were preselected into internships increased by 18 percent. "We have seen a definite increase in supervised-practice capacity since 2008 when CADE began taking steps to actively address the need for more supervised practice sites," says Chung. "There is still more work to be done, but these numbers are encouraging."

As an advisor to the Egg Nutrition Center for 15 years, I was thrilled to see the "Food Love" feature on eggs (Winter *ADA Times*). More good news about eggs has since become available. The latest U.S. Department of Agriculture nutrition analysis data on eggs show they are 14 percent lower in cholesterol and are 61 percent higher in vitamin D compared to previous data. In addition, the 2010 *Dietary Guidelines* identify eggs as a nutrient-dense food.

Neva Cochran, MS, RD, LD
Dallas, Texas

Your poignant letter is a perfect example of how many of these stores can benefit from the expertise of a registered dietitian. We, too, struggled with that particular photo, which was a free press picture. We even contacted several dollar store chains to try to arrange artwork with healthier food options, but they either turned down the opportunity or did not respond. In the end, we included the photo to demonstrate the range of offerings across discount store formats (e.g. from fresh produce at grocery outlets to soda-lined aisles at dollar stores).

Share your thoughts and ideas by e-mailing adatimes@eatright.org. Remember to put "Letter to the Editor" in the subject field.



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Ways to Help Your Clients (and When to Refer Them to Other Experts)

By Leslie Goldman, MPH

Alyce Cornyn-Selby vividly remembers her husband's response when she told him she wanted to lose weight: He brought home a deep-dish pizza. "It is extremely difficult to watch your spouse eat pizza and not have any of it," says the 64-year-old author from Portland, Ore. "That smell is intoxicating, and pizza—everything, really—was a trigger food for me." Mr. Helpful soon stepped up his efforts by assuring his wife, who at the time was about 100 pounds overweight, that she was fine the way she was. When she'd make a lean, healthful dinner, he'd tell her she was going to "get sick eating like that." If she balked, he would say, "You're so grouchy when you diet!" It is a tale all too familiar to ADA spokesperson Jim White, RD, ACSM/HFS, owner of Jim White Fitness and Nutrition Studios in Virginia Beach, who says diet sabotage is a common occurrence for RDs who work with clients who are trying to lose weight. "A client will start seeing results and the partner gets a little insecure," says White. "I've had clients whose partners have said, 'You look too skinny' or 'You need to stop losing weight,' when in truth, they still have a good amount to lose."

Why People Who Should Be Supportive May Sabotage Instead

According to Edward Abramson, PhD, professor emeritus of psychology at California State University-Chico and author of *Body Intelligence: Lose Weight, Keep It Off and Feel Great About Your Body Without Dieting* (McGraw Hill 2006), when one person in a relationship makes a commitment to become healthier and the other does not, the equilibrium changes and this often can lead to conflict or drama.

Particularly in a dynamic that nurtures bad habits, that extra weight serves an emotional function, Abramson explains. For example, take a husband who drinks too much, comes home late one night smelling of alcohol, and his wife, who is overweight, complains. “He can counter with, ‘Who are you to talk? You say you’re on a diet but you ate cake yesterday.’ Now they’re even,” says Abramson. “But if she loses weight, it’s incumbent upon him to stop drinking.”

Guilt about one’s own health can be another issue. “Some people sabotage because they feel badly if they themselves are overweight or unhealthy,” says Lalita Kaul, PhD, RD, LDN, professor of nutrition at Howard University College of Medicine in Washington, D.C. “If one person starts to exercise, then the other one may feel pressured to exercise, too.”

Abramson agrees. “If they don’t feel like exercising, they may decide it would be easier for them to get their partner to stop than for them to start,” he says.

Spouses aren’t the only family members who can wreak havoc on weight loss. Jaye Yaruss, of Orange County, Calif., has to contend with a mother-in-law who lavishes her family with multicourse feasts featuring brisket, chicken, roast beef, starchy side dishes and dessert. Yaruss, who has struggled with obesity for more than three decades, once broke down and begged, “You have to stop stuffing us!” Her mother-in-law’s reply was, “You can never deprive me of the opportunity to show you my love.”

Today Show nutritionist and private practitioner Joy Bauer, RD, who estimates that more than half her clients have been confronted with saboteur loved ones, says most of the time it is without malice. “To a lot of people, food *is* love,” says Bauer. “It may not be that they want you to fail or want to jack up your cholesterol. Food is their way of pampering you with love and sunshine.”

But not all saboteurs come from such a well-intentioned place. According to White, the ultimate saboteurs are friends—and women can be much more



effective than men. “They’ll make passive-aggressive comments, perhaps out of jealousy, or ask, ‘Why don’t you live a little bit?’ when their weight-conscious friend steers clear of the group’s nacho appetizer,” he says.

Reality TV personality Ruby Gettinger, whose weight-loss journey is the subject of Style Network’s highest-rated show “Ruby,” has faced such “frienemy” tactics. “I’ve had friends say, ‘You look good right now. You should stop losing weight,’” says Gettinger, who shed nearly 400 pounds from a high of 716 pounds. “I don’t get it. It’s almost like misery loves company.”

“It feels less self-destructive when someone else also is participating in a bad habit,” explains Bauer. “If I’m lusting for an ice cream sundae, I’ll feel less guilty if my best friend shares it with me. Plus, it’s more fun!”

Science seems to back this behavior: In a 2007 *New England Journal of Medicine* study, researchers found having an overweight friend makes an individual 57 percent more likely to pack on pounds, while having an obese spouse increases the odds of being overweight by 37 percent.

So What’s a Dieter To Do?

When it comes to avoiding would-be saboteurs, Kaul advises clients to begin by keeping their weight loss intentions under wraps. “You don’t need to announce, ‘I’m on a diet!’ The moment you do, it sets you up for failure.” Besides giving food pushers a signal to sabotage, says Kaul, such a proclamation can be misconstrued as a holier-than-thou attitude or arouse guilty feelings in others if they, too, should be improving their health—all of which can challenge a saboteur to seduce even harder.

For handling an individual who’s pushing tempting treats, Kaul recommends a friendly but firm, *No, thank you*. But in the case of a particularly relentless saboteur, a client may need to speak up.

“When they’re in the midst of a situation in which everyone is pushing them to eat, that is when they have to lay it on the table,” says Bauer, recalling a client whose circle of girlfriends had well-established traditions like splitting giant brownie sundaes or meeting for drinks during Happy Hour after work.

Bauer’s advice: Confront, but don’t be confrontational. “Instead,” she says, “say something like, ‘Trust me, I would *love* to eat that, but it’s only been a few weeks into my plan and I’m trying so hard. I’m begging you, please don’t egg me on because you know I will cave!’”

Within the delicate dynamic of a marriage, Abramson says it is essential to separate weight issues from marital issues: “They’ll need to say in a calm, non-confrontational way, ‘I’m confused. You tell me you support me, but then you bring home chocolate’ or ‘If you don’t want to exercise, that’s your business, but it is necessary for me to lose weight to improve my health. I need you to be supportive, or at least I ask that you not try to undermine my efforts.’”

Dieters are not the only ones who need positive reinforcement, according to Katherine Tallmadge, MS, RD, LD, owner of Personalized Nutrition in Washington, D.C., and author of *Diet Simple* (LifeLine Press 2002). She suggests praising healthier options being served by family and friends. Instead of bemoaning the fat content of the fried calamari, fawn over the grilled fish. Rather than groan, “No dessert for me... I’ve already gained five pounds from this meal,” try saying, “Dinner was so delicious, I can’t have another bite!”