

## Avoiding weight regain is the name of the game

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Losing weight is only half the battle for people with obesity. The hardest problem most people face is keeping the weight off. MRC Human Nutrition Research is currently investigating the efficacy of diets, which differ in protein and carbohydrate content, to prevent people piling on the fat once the diet is over.

The **Cambridge** based research project is part of a pan-European study, DiOGenes (diet, obesity and genes), seeking new insights into the prevention of obesity. It involves over 100 overweight/obese adults and their children and those who have completed the initial weight loss phase have so far experienced an 8-10% weight loss.

Dr AnnaKarin Lindroos, the dietitian running the study said, *"The study is particularly beneficial as the whole family are provided with nutritional advice and dietary support, helping adults to lose weight and encouraging children to adopt a healthy lifestyle from an early age."*

Following the weight loss phase, families will be divided into five groups. Each diet group will be asked to eat a particular balance of carbohydrate and protein, which is achieved by assigning protein and carbohydrate points to every food serving. Participants are free to eat as many points as they like, however the number of protein and carbohydrate points must be equal each day. This enables the study to manipulate macronutrient composition and assess which diet is most effective in preventing weight regain.

Each family receives a 'diet pack' containing example menus, food tables, a protein/carbohydrate intake calculator and weight loss chart, which helps them follow specific dietary guidelines such as:

- Balancing the amount of carbohydrates to protein eaten
- Identifying certain types of carbohydrate foods; and
- Choosing foods low in fat

Jill McCulloch, a Diogenes volunteer, comments, *"I've lost 9.2kg (almost 1 \_ stones) in eight weeks and feel absolutely fantastic, I can't wait to continue with the healthy eating plan. I think the one to one nutritional consultations and support have been key to my weight loss and I've learnt so much about healthy eating, which my children are definitely picking up. It's certainly changed the way all of the family look at food for the better."*

Dr Susan Jebb, Head of Nutrition and Health Research at HNR comments, *"It's great to see Cambridge involved in the DiOGenes study since it will be influential in developing public health information and advice on how to prevent weight gain and maintain a healthy weight across Europe."*

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Notes to Editor:

- Jill McCulloch from Ely is available to talk about her experiences on the DiOGenes study, how it has changed her eating habits and those of her children.
- DiOGenes is an innovative multi-disciplinary, multi-centre research project to advance understanding of how obesity can be prevented and treated from a dietary perspective. It integrates studies of dietary, genetic, physiological and psychological/behavioural factors.
- The five-year programme began recently and involves a consortium of 29 partners across 14 Europe Countries. The dietary intervention study will cover centres in 8 of these countries.
- **Cambridge** is the only UK based centre for this dietary intervention study.
- To find out more about the study, please visit [www.diogenes-eu.org](http://www.diogenes-eu.org) or to volunteer please contact 01223 437529 or email [Diogenes@mrc-hnr.cam.ac.uk](mailto:Diogenes@mrc-hnr.cam.ac.uk)
- Based on the new knowledge generated, the project will demonstrate prototypes of innovative products or advice regimes, which will help susceptible individuals to avoid weight gain, and link with implementers to facilitate commercialisation in the market place.

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