DSU Half-Ton Weight Loss Challenge: Program Summary

Here's an abbreviated summary of the weekly tips provided by the DE Center for Health Promotion during the “Half-Ton Challenge” weight loss program. Thanks for participating!

**Week 1: Lessons from the Masters**
The National Weight Control Registry is the nation’s largest study of individuals who have lost weight and kept it off. Research about what they share in common has identified what works, and provides us with a blueprint for success. Regular physical activity, limited dining out and daily breakfast are examples of habits that breed success.

**Week 2: Saving Calories**
For successful weight loss, calories count. Save calories by substituting high-calorie foods with lower-calorie alternatives, or by simply eating smaller amounts throughout the day. Small "savings" in your daily calorie intake can add up to big results. A daily savings of just 100 calories will result in a 10-pound weight loss in one year!

**Week 3: Downsize Your Portions**
Serving sizes of foods have gradually increased over the years. To lose weight, portion control is part of the recipe for success. Educate yourself about how much is too much at [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov). You can also determine which foods are essential for good health, and how much of these foods you need daily.

**Week 4: Rethink Your Drink**
Another way to reduce your calorie intake is to cut back on the number of calories consumed in liquid form, such as fancy coffee drinks and sugary beverages. Read the labels on your favorite beverages, or go to company websites to determine how many calories they contain. Save calories by replacing high-calorie beverages with lower-calorie alternatives. Water is always your best bet!

**Week 5: Sensible Snacking**
You can have your snack and lose weight, too. Learning the calorie values of your favorite snacks will help you to make better choices. By selecting sensible snacks that fit into the 100-150 calorie range, you can fend off hunger and prevent that ravenous feeling that leads to overeating later.

**Week 6: Pump Up the Produce**
Fruits and vegetables provide more "fullness" with fewer calories. They are also chock full of disease-fighting nutrients. Determine how many servings of fruits and vegetables you are currently consuming and work on simply increasing that number. Eat more and weigh less with fruits and vegetables.
**Week 7: Eating Out Healthfully**
Americans are dining out more frequently. When we eat out, we tend to consume more calories. Employ strategies to limit portion sizes and reduce the total calories consumed when eating away from home. Share an entrée, take home a doggie bag, and research nutrition information online to become an educated consumer.

**Week 8: Create A Supportive Eating Environment**
Oftentimes, we eat in response to a "cue," such as the mere sight of food. To enhance your ability to successfully change your behavior, take an inventory of your surroundings. Place high-calorie foods out of sight, keep your walking shoes next to the front door and keep healthier food choices front row and center in the fridge. Make your environment at work and home supportive of your goals.

**Week 9: Spend Your Calories Wisely – Limit The Extras**
To lose weight, monitor calories that come from nonessential foods, or "extras." Similar to balancing a budget, don't overspend your calorie allotment. Take a look at how many calories you consume in the form of fats, alcohol and sweets. Determine your nutritional needs at [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov) and "budget" your choices throughout the day.

**Week 10: Emotional Eating**
Many people eat for reasons other than hunger, and that can sabotage weight loss efforts. Turning to unhealthy food in an emotional state will add stress in that now you're not meeting your weight loss goals. Instead, ask yourself, “Am I truly hungry?” Try finding other methods to help ease your stress and emotions – for example, take a walk or read a good book.

**Week 11: Do Fats Make You Fat?**
Fats are one of three major nutrients and they contribute 9 calories per gram to food - more than twice the amount contributed by carbohydrates and proteins. High fat foods are very high in calories; reducing your intake is a great way to “save” calories. Be choosy when choosing fats. For heart health, limit solid saturated fats and replace them with mono- or polyunsaturated fats instead.

**Week 12: Stay the Course**
You can’t put a price on good health; it’s worth the effort to continue your weight-loss journey. Changing your eating and activity habits takes time, and nobody is perfect. Continue practicing healthier habits until they become routine. Prevent a lapse from turning into a relapse by getting right back on track. Celebrate small successes, take advantage of available resources and support, and keep your eye on the prize - a healthier you!