Title: Internet tools can help aid in weight loss

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Abstract:
Almost half of Americans are overweight or obese. It is well known that in order to lose the weight they need to modify their diet and increase their physical activity. However, many have not been properly educated or do not have the proper tools to achieve this goal. Face-to-face programs such as Weight Watchers have been proven effective for long term weight management however many people can not afford this program or would prefer a more private setting. In this age of technology, increased internet access and smart phones can be a valuable tool to provide education and support for these patients.

Internet tools can help aid in weight loss

Are you overweight or obese?
- Calculate your Body Mass Index or BMI. This measurement uses your height and weight to **estimate** how healthy your body weight is.
- Use this internet tool to help you figure it out: http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/
- BMI Categories:
  o Underweight = <18.5
  o Normal weight = 18.5-24.9
  o Overweight = 25-29.9
  o Obesity = BMI of 30 or greater

What are the health benefits from losing weight?
- Besides giving you more energy and making you feel better about how you look, there are many health benefits from losing weight such as:
  o Lowering blood pressure
  o Lowering "bad" cholesterol or LDL
  o Improving diabetes by controlling blood sugars better
  o Decreasing your risk of heart attack or stroke
  o Decreasing your risk for certain cancers
  o Plus many more!!

How much weight do you need to lose?
- Studies have shown that patients noticed health benefits after losing 5-10% of their body weight. So if you weigh 200 lbs you will see benefits from losing just 10-20 lbs.

Where to begin?
- This can seem overwhelming at first but just set a simple goal, like 10 lbs.
  o 3500 calories = one pound of fat
  o You can lose calories by exercising or reducing how much you eat, but it is best to do a combination of the two
  o There are many free tools on the internet that can help you get started. They will help you set a weight loss goal, help you start a food diary, chart your progress, give you fitness tips, and even give you recipes…**All Free!!**
    ▪ The Daily Plate - http://www.thedailyplate.com/
    ▪ Sparkpeople - http://www.sparkpeople.com/
    ▪ Discovery Health National Body Challenge - http://health.discovery.com/national-body-challenge/national-body-challenge.html

The key to weight loss is to make a commitment and start off slow (1-2 lbs per week is great!). Using the internet tools listed above is a great way to learn about healthier eating (do you really know how many calories you eat in a day, you may be surprised) and fitness tips (do you know that you burn about 100 calories per mile; it doesn't matter if you run or walk it)

Choose fruits and vegetables over unhealthy fatty foods