

Weight Loss Plan Critique- EPHE 155

Weight Watchers-

Weight watchers is a weight loss program that was created in the 60s to guide you on what you should and shouldn't eat. It eventually evolved into a points program where you track what you eat in a day through points making "bad foods" worth more and "good foods" worth less. You get an allotted number of points for one day. There are different plans that you can decide the number of points you get during the day (weight loss, maintaining weight)

Claims: The program encourages you to eat healthily and be active through-

"Nutrition made simple"

"No quick fixes"

"A strong support system"

Is there peer-reviewed scientific research backing up the claims?

Yes, there is peer-reviewed research backing up the claims of the program being a strong support system. The support system of weight watchers is compared to other kinds of support groups like AA where people tend to overconsume something. It seems like people just like to feel that they are supported and that can potentially help them lose weight, keep clean or just feel better about themselves.

Red flags in the advertisement:

The advertisements make the program seem like you can eat whatever you want and with some exercise, you'll just shed the weight away which is not the case, it makes the program seem like you have to pay for the secret code to lose weight when that's not the real case. They have popular overweight celebrities telling you this information to make you believe that what they're saying is true because most people like to believe that celebrities are the guide to a good life.

Positive aspects of the weight loss plan:

Some positive aspects of the plan are that they don't want you to restrict what you eat and that you can eat whatever you want. The sense of community does also seem like a good aspect because you can talk about your struggles with weight loss with others, and you can support each other through the journey. The base idea of the points is a good idea but Weight Watchers is a program that is based on overweight people that typically have a difficult time with eating

Angelica Allen
V01009160
EPHE 155
November 2022

and then the point system got messed up as people used the zero-point foods to their advantage.

Negative aspects of the weight loss plan:

The whole points system is a major negative aspect because while you can eat whatever you want but you can only eat so much of it. I think a better way to make the plan would've been to be making it a calorie deficit instead of labelling some foods as good and others as bad. I say this because the healthy foods (vegetables, fruits, plain meat) are all zero-point foods which almost makes it seem like you can eat as much as you want. So people may get confused as to why they aren't losing weight because they keep eating a bunch of zero-point foods thinking that it's doing nothing but in actuality all food does something

Would you recommend this program?

No, I probably wouldn't recommend this program. I wouldn't recommend it because the idea of food being a points system doesn't sound like a good way to lose weight but a way to have a bad relationship with food. There are different programs out there that will achieve what Weight Watchers wants to do but for free so overall I don't think that Weight Watchers is a good program. It may work for some but otherwise is a scam.

Ahern, A. L., Olson, A. D., Aston, L. M., & Jebb, S. A. (2011, June 6). *Weight Watchers on prescription: An observational study of weight change among adults referred to weight watchers by the NHS - BMC Public Health*. BioMed Central. Retrieved November 28, 2022, from <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-11-434>

Apovian, C. M., Brouillard, E., & Young, L. (2018). *Clinical guide to popular diets*. CRC Press.

Moisio, R., & Beruchashvili, M. (2010, February). *Questing for Well-Being at Weight Watchers: The Role of the Spiritual- Therapeutic Model in a Support Group*. Academic.oup.com. Retrieved November 28, 2022, from <https://academic.oup.com/jcr/article/36/5/857/1790755>

Weight Watchers. (n.d.). *Meet the WeightWatchers® ZeroPoint™ Foods list: WW USA*. WeightWatchers Weight-Loss Program-Lose Weight and Keep it Off. Retrieved November 28, 2022, from <https://www.weightwatchers.com/ca/en/how-it-works/zero-point-foods>