

Great Lakes Weight and Wellness

THE OPTIFAST[®] PROGRAM OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Obesity is one of the most critical health problems we face today. It is a chronic medical condition that affects millions of Americans, and the problem is growing worse each year. Obesity is a killer. It causes or contributes to the development of an array of life-threatening diseases, including hypertension, heart disease, and type 2 diabetes.

Why are so many people burdened by the problem of obesity? Why can't these individuals simply eat less and lose weight? Unfortunately, the solution to the problem isn't that easy because the root causes of obesity are a complex interaction of genetic, social, cultural, and emotional factors. Unless all aspects of the problem are addressed, it is nearly impossible for most obese people to achieve sustained weight loss.

The OPTIFAST Program offers new hope to the obese. It is a medically based obesity treatment program that helps obese patients lose weight safely and maintain their weight loss. Developed by Sandoz Nutrition (now Novartis Nutrition), the OPTIFAST Program is based on the belief that a problem as complex as obesity requires a complex solution—one that deals effectively with the physical, social, and emotional aspects of being overweight. Novartis Nutrition has created a multidisciplinary approach to obesity treatment that combines a high quality, calorie controlled liquid diet with behavior modification, nutrition education, exercise, psychological support, and medical monitoring of the patient's conditions.

HISTORY OF THE OPTIFAST PROGRAM

In the early 1970's, Dr. Victor Vertes, Director of the Department of Medicine at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Cleveland, OH, evolved the concept of stimuli narrowing, or using very controlled liquid nutritional formulas as a means of helping obese patients lose weight. Dr. Vertes' work grew out of studies on the physiological effects of this approach conducted in the late 1960's by Dr. Saul Genuth, Director of Mt. Sinai's Saltzman Institute for Clinical Investigation.

In working with obese patients, Drs. Vertes and Genuth discovered that limiting food intake by using a liquid formula diet instead effectively promoted rapid weight loss, but that patients tended to regain the weight once they left the program. It was clear that another element of treatment was needed to help patients sustain their weight loss.

In 1974, Sandoz Nutrition developed The OPTIFAST Program with the assistance of Vertes, Genuth, and other experts in the treatment of obesity. In addition to the liquid formula diet, Sandoz Nutrition worked with Dr. Vertes to develop a weight maintenance program, and with behavior modification experts from around the country to create the behavioral system that forms the framework of the present OPTIFAST Program.

THE OPTIFAST FORMULA

The OPTIFAST products are manufactured by Novartis Nutrition Corporation. Novartis Nutrition has developed a series of nutritional products useful in the treatment of obesity. Foremost among them is the OPTIFAST liquid formula, a low-calorie nutritional product that can be used by patients in a complete meal replacement program. The OPTIFAST Formula contains balanced nutrition, including high quality protein, carbohydrates, minerals, and vitamins. It contains no amphetamines, laxatives, or water pills, and is available only through physicians who have received special training in the OPTIFAST Program treatment.