



CEDARS-SINAI MEDICAL CENTER.

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – January 22, 2004

HIGHLIGHTS:

It's estimated that one in two New Year's resolutions are broken within a month. If you've already experienced a false start to your 2004 health-related resolutions, Cedars-Sinai's Intervent program for health, fitness and wellness management can get you back on track with its one-on-one, year-long coaching to help you master important lifestyle skills and reduce your risk for cardiovascular disease. Dr. Donna Polk, Assistant Medical Director of Cedars-Sinai's Preventive and Rehabilitative Cardiac Center, is available to answer questions related to the Intervent program, as are three participants in the program.

CEDARS-SINAI'S HEALTH, FITNESS AND WELLNESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM OFFERS ONE-ON-ONE COACHING TO HELP YOU KEEP YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS ALL YEAR-LONG

LOS ANGELES (Jan. 22, 2004) – If your health-related New Year's resolutions didn't last much longer than a recent celebrity marriage, don't despair. Whether you're trying to lose weight, stop smoking, lower your cholesterol, manage your stress, increase your physical activity, or have other health- or fitness-related resolutions, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center's Preventive and Rehabilitative Cardiac Center's new one-on-one coaching/mentoring program can help.

The success of the program, named Intervent USA, is due in large part to year-long, one-on-one coaching provided by experienced health professionals called "mentors." As the only lifestyle management program of its kind in the Los Angeles area, Intervent was initially offered only to patients in Cedars-Sinai's cardiac rehabilitation program. Last November, Cedars-Sinai expanded its program to include people who don't have heart problems but who want to make primary preventive health lifestyle changes such as stopping smoking, becoming more physically active, lowering their cholesterol, weight, or blood pressure and managing their stress.

"The average person doesn't change behaviors or habits without some type of accountability," explains Donna Polk, MD, MPH, Assistant Medical Director at Cedars-Sinai's Preventive and Rehabilitative Cardiac Center. "By providing participants with a personal coach, who's available for questions and encouragement, people are more accountable and therefore more likely to make the lifestyle changes that are needed to reduce their risk factors for heart-related disease." Mentors initially meet with the participants on a weekly basis, then less often as they progress toward their goals.

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While other similar programs can help you achieve your goals in the short-term, participants often don't stay with them long enough for the changes to become ongoing, permanent habits. In the Cedars-Sinai program, participants learn not only the skills they need but, with the help of their coach, they learn how to implement and refine them, and most importantly, how to maintain their new habits for an entire year – and beyond.

Dr. Polk describes the program as “highly interactive.” It begins with an evaluation of the participants’ current health behaviors and risk factors for chronic disease, readiness for change, eating habits, and physical activity. Next, with the help of their mentors, the participants set short-term and long-term goals and develop an individualized action plan that includes educational kits and audios and self-management tools to monitor their eating and exercise. As they start learning how to make the necessary changes in their lives, participants see their coaches less frequently. Scientific research on the results of the Intervent USA program has been published in medical journals including the American Journal of Cardiology.

“As a researcher, I was familiar with Intervent USA founder Dr. Neil Gordon’s studies on stress,” says Iris Mink, a semi-retired UCLA research psychologist. As a layman, she was also aware of his research on exercise and nutrition. “What’s most powerful about this program is that it’s based on the latest medical literature and is offered under the auspices of a research-based medical center (Cedars-Sinai). You just can’t get this type of program anywhere else.”

When her younger sister was diagnosed with coronary artery disease last summer, Mink, who is in her sixties, decided to have her own health evaluated. It was during a follow-up visit with Dr. Polk in November that she learned about the Intervent USA program.

Focusing on the exercise, nutrition and stress management modules, Mink says she likes the fact that the program lasts an entire year, is “reasonably priced” and that she can call her mentor when she needs to. “I don’t know why anyone who has any health concerns wouldn’t be rushing to join it.”

Carol Thaler, a respiratory therapist from Los Angeles, agrees. She used to get discouraged when she’d hit an obstacle or a plateau in her weight loss efforts, especially those times when she thought she was doing everything “right.” “Now, if I run into a problem, I can pick up the phone and call my mentor and ask for help,” she says. She describes her mentor as someone who listens well; a quality Thaler calls “the key.” “I have someone to talk to, someone to help me get through it. It’s a real positive thing.” While losing weight is one of her goals, she says it’s not her real goal. “My goal is to feel better, be healthier and have more energy for my grandkids and my work. I want to live to be a ripe old age.”

Phase 1 (the first year of the program) costs approximately \$1 per day. Phase II (maintenance counseling) has a \$35 monthly charge.

For more information on the Intervent USA program, please call (310) 423-9700 or email wellness.solutions@cshs.org.

Cedars-Sinai is one of the largest nonprofit academic medical centers in the Western United States. For the fifth straight two-year period, it has been named Southern California's gold standard in health care in an independent survey. Cedars-Sinai is internationally renowned for its diagnostic and treatment capabilities and its broad spectrum of programs and services, as well as breakthroughs in biomedical research and superlative medical education. It ranks among the top 10 non-university hospitals in the nation for its research activities.

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