

A brief behavioural intervention to promote regular self-weighing to prevent weight regain after weight loss: a RCT

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Plain English summary

RCT intervention preventing weight regain

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Plain English summary

Most people who lose weight will put this weight back on within 2 years. Maintaining weight loss will reduce the chances of developing conditions such as diabetes mellitus, heart disease and cancer, to which people who are overweight are more prone. We evaluated an intervention to help people keep off the weight they had lost after they had completed a weight loss programme such as Weight Watchers® (Maidenhead, UK; www.weightwatchers.com/uk) or Slimming World® (Alfreton, UK; www.slimmingworld.co.uk). A total of 583 adults were recruited to the study, all of whom had lost at least 5% of their weight after attending a weight loss programme. The participants were randomly allocated to one of two groups: an intervention group or a usual-care group. The intervention group participants received three telephone calls over 12 weeks that encouraged them to set a weight target, weigh themselves every day and record their weight on a record card. They also received regular text messages encouraging them to weigh themselves each day. The usual-care group received leaflets about following a healthy lifestyle. Participants in both groups were weighed at the start of the study and at 3 and 12 months later, and also completed questionnaires about their health. Both groups on average did not change their weight and there was no evidence that the intervention helped people maintain their weight loss. It is possible that the intervention was too brief to change people's lifestyle behaviours. More research is needed to find ways of stopping people gaining the weight that they have lost so that their long-term health can be improved.

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