TARGET AUDIENCE

This program is for adults who are 45 to 76 years old, have type 2 diabetes, and a body mass index of 25.0 or higher.

SUMMARY

The Look AHEAD program, an intensive lifestyle program, is designed to help adults with type 2 diabetes who are overweight or obese lose weight and maintain their weight loss through decreasing caloric intake and increasing physical activity. The program's primary goal is to reduce the incidence of major cardiovascular events.

EVIDENCE

A randomized controlled trial was conducted at 16 different sites with over 5,000 participants. After 1 year, participants in the program lost significantly more weight (8.6%) compared to the control group (0.6%), and they significantly increased their fitness levels. Also, a greater proportion of intervention participants experienced reductions in their diabetes, hypertension, and lipid lowering medications compared to the control group. Intervention participants had significantly greater improvement in all measured cardiovascular risk factors, except low-density lipoprotein cholesterol levels compared to the control group. Across the 4 years, participants in the intervention group experienced significantly greater improvements in weight, fitness, glycemic control, and levels of high-density lipoprotein cholesterol and triglycerides compared to the control group. However, the effects of the program on cardiovascular risk factors diminished over time. At 8 years, intervention participants still had a significant weight loss compared to the control group, but there was no effect of the program on cardiovascular risk factors. Due to the lack of effects on the main program objective of decreasing major cardiovascular events, the program was stopped at 8 years and did not continue to 11 years as intended.

COMPONENTS

The Look AHEAD program is designed to induce a minimum weight loss of 7% of initial body weight for adults with type 2 diabetes and who have a body mass index (BMI) of 25.0 or higher. The program is modeled after behavioral programs that have been developed for treating individuals with type 2 diabetes and who are obese, includes components of the National Diabetes Prevention Program*, and is comprised of a dietary element and a physical activity part.

- **Dietary component** requires participants who weigh 250 pounds or less to consume 1200-1500 kcal/day, or participants who weight over 250 pounds should consume 1500-1800 kcal/day. Two meal replacement shakes and a portion controlled snack are provided to help participants meet this caloric goal for the first 20 weeks. Participants can eat one self-selected meal a day during this time period. After 20 weeks, participants receive one meal replacement shake, and they can self-select two meals per day until the end of the program.

- **Physical activity component** encourages participants to achieve 175 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week. Occupational physical activity is not considered.

Participants meet in small groups and individually and receive counseling, cognitive behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing, and problem-solving skill instruction. In addition, participants keep daily records of their food intake, physical activity, and other related health behaviors to discuss in their counseling sessions.

* A separate Fact Sheet is available for this program.

PREVIOUS USE

The program began in 2001, and no previous use information beyond the evaluation studies was located.
Look AHEAD

TRAINING

The program must be delivered by a team of registered dietitians, psychologists, and exercise specialists. Specific training requirements were not located.

CONSIDERATIONS

Considerations for implementing this program include understanding this program has strict parameters for participants (i.e., individuals who have type 2 diabetes and have a BMI over 25.0), receiving buy-in from participants as this program requires a substantial time commitment and self-motivation, and finding professionals who are willing to commit to the program’s time frame for program delivery.

The Clearinghouse can help address these considerations. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

IMPLEMENTATION

If you are interested in implementing Look AHEAD, the Clearinghouse is interested in helping you!
Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

The program lasts 1 year with optional group meetings for 7 additional years. During the first year, participants meet in groups once a week for 60 to 75 minutes for the first 3 weeks of each month and individually for the last week of the month for 20 to 30 minutes. After 6 months, participants meet in groups twice a month and once a month individually. In years two through eight, participants can attend a monthly individual meeting and a group meeting. Participants can also attend an optional refresher group meeting each year.

No information on implementation costs was available.

EVALUATION PLAN

To move Look AHEAD to the Effective category on the Clearinghouse Continuum of Evidence at least one external evaluation must be conducted that demonstrates sustained, positive outcomes. This study must be conducted independently of the program developer.

The Clearinghouse can help you develop an evaluation plan to ensure the program components are meeting your goals. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

CONTACT

Contact the Clearinghouse with any questions regarding this program.
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