

SUSTAINABLE WEIGHT LOSS TAKES CENTER STAGE AT RAK HOSPITAL'S EXPERT SESSION

Mindful Eating: The Secret to Lasting Weight Loss and a Healthier Relationship with Food

- Drastic calorie-cutting or extreme dieting could do more harm than good
- Combining aerobic exercise and strength training vital for effective weight management
- Chronic stress and sleep deprivation can trigger hormonal imbalances that lead to weight gain.

13 March, 2025; Ras Al Khaimah, UAE – In a bid to support the community on their weight loss journey, RAK Hospital hosted an insightful and interactive session on sustainable weight management, as part of the 5th RAK Weight Loss Challenge 2025. Led by Ruba Elhourani, Senior Clinical Dietician and Head of Department at RAK Hospital, the session aimed to educate participants on how to achieve long-term, healthy weight loss through practical and science-backed strategies.

Addressing an eager audience, Elhourani emphasized that weight management isn't just about numbers on a scale—it's about overall well-being, longevity, and reducing the risk of serious health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, high cholesterol, hypertension, and even depression. She explained that understanding one's ideal body weight isn't merely about BMI but also about body composition, including muscle mass, fat distribution, and metabolic rate. Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight is essential for enhancing quality of life and preventing chronic illnesses that are often linked to obesity.

During the session, common weight loss mistakes were discussed, including over-reliance on the scale, consuming too many or too few calories, choosing misleading “diet” foods, and not balancing exercise properly. She stressed that drastic calorie-cutting or extreme dieting could do more harm than good, as the body needs adequate nutrients to function effectively. Instead, she encouraged participants to focus on a well-balanced diet, rich in protein, fiber, and healthy fats, to support metabolism and sustain energy levels.

A key takeaway from the session was mindful eating, which encourages being fully present during meals. Elhourani highlighted how eating while distracted—whether working, watching TV, or using mobile phones—often leads to overeating and poor digestion. She urged participants to slow down, chew thoroughly, and savor their meals, helping them recognize true hunger and fullness cues.

By focusing on the sensory experience of eating and avoiding distractions, individuals can develop a healthier relationship with food, improve digestion, and manage portions better. This

approach also helps distinguish between real hunger and emotional cravings, promoting long-term weight management.

Elhourani also elaborated on the benefits of intermittent fasting, which can help regulate insulin levels and promote fat loss when done correctly. Cutting back on refined carbohydrates and sugar was also highlighted as a crucial step in preventing excessive fat storage and managing cravings.

Physical activity was another focal point, with Elhourani underscoring the role of both aerobic exercise and strength training in effective weight management. She advised participants to find activities they enjoy, as consistency is key. Additionally, she spoke about the often-overlooked impact of stress and sleep on weight loss, noting that chronic stress and sleep deprivation can trigger hormonal imbalances that lead to weight gain.

“Achieving sustainable weight loss is about making small, consistent changes that fit into your lifestyle. There's no one-size-fits-all solution, and what works for one person may not work for another,” she said. She emphasized that patience and a long-term commitment to healthful habits yield better results than short-lived crash diets or extreme workout regimens.

The session concluded with an engaging Q&A, where participants received personalized advice on tackling their weight loss challenges. Many left feeling motivated, equipped with practical knowledge to make informed choices about their health. As the RAK Weight Loss Challenge 2025 progresses, RAK Hospital continues to empower individuals with expert-led education and practical tools to help them on their journey to better health.

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