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How can I maintain my weight loss as I age?

BY DR. JULIE T. CHEN, M.D.

Dr. Julie, I am worried about my weight as I age. It seems that every year it becomes harder and harder to lose weight. What labs should I have my doctor check and what can I do to help with healthy aging in regards to my weight and disease prevention via diet?

THESE are great questions and apply to all of us as we age. Let's start with answering your first question: what labs are important in checking for weight gain? The most important thing is to have your thyroid and adrenal checked for hypothyroidism and adrenal fatigue. The other labs that are important are your sex hormone levels. Our endocrine system is very important in determining our metabolism.

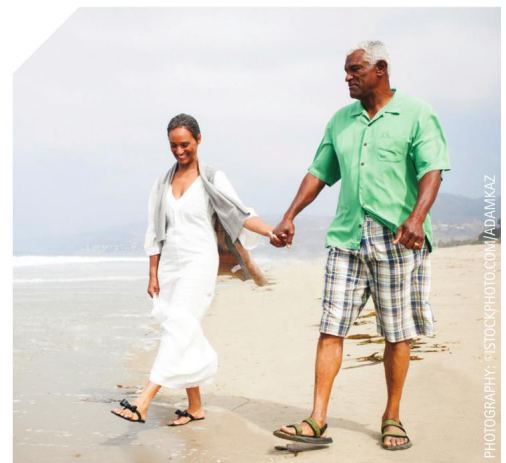
You also will want to have your doctor check your sugar and cholesterol levels along with your kidney and liver function. You may want to make sure that the weight gain isn't non-specific swelling, in which case you should have your blood pressure, kidney function and heart function checked closely for any issues. Another interesting factor may be that sometimes when we continue to eat foods that trigger our food sensitivities or allergies, it can cause non-specific bloating, gassiness and weight gain. So, ask your doc-

tor for food sensitivity testing as well.

Once you've had these labs checked, you should take a look at your diet and see if there are foods that are keeping you from losing weight. The diet you want to stick to for optimal weight loss is one that is mostly anti-inflammatory. The main food groups to eat are rainbow-coloured vegetables and plant-based proteins and/or lean, low in saturated fat animal proteins. I would recommend organic to prevent unintentional ingestion of chemicals and hormones with the meats and vegetables.

As you age, I caution you to eat fewer starches, sweets and even fruits since excessive intake of fruits can lead to elevated blood sugar levels as well as elevated triglycerides. So, make sure to have your sugar and lipid levels checked to see how cautious you have to be with your intake of these foods.

Finally, you want to make sure that you are staying hydrated with water or antioxi-



dant rich teas. Our body requires water for an efficient metabolic rate. So, if you are dehydrated, you will tend to bloat and have a harder time with weight loss.

Besides our food intake, exercise is essential for healthy aging and weight maintenance. So, make sure that you are moving every day as our bodies are made to move. You should incorporate daily walking goals and aim to do weight training or muscle strength training along with targeted, moderate intensity, cardiovascular exercise at least about 2-3 times per week. Check with your physician before you start with any exercises or activities to make sure you are safe to start. If you are not sure what to do with weight training or cardiovascular exercises, you may want to invest in getting a few sessions with a trainer to get you going on the right track. **2**

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