

## Technology provides no-nonsense information for weight loss

By Suzanne Laurent , Staff writer  
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*(A new weight-loss program borrows technology used on "The Big Loser," and invented by a Pittsburgh firm.)*

Jim Wiesman found himself frustrated in his efforts to lose weight.

"I love food, all kinds," said Wiesman, an accountant from Brentwood, N.H. "Problem is I like what's quick and easy, and in most cases, fattening."

Wiesman, 58, said he's been carrying around an unwanted 75 pounds since his oldest son suddenly died in 1997 and Wiesman began to eat out of stress. Then last April, he had knee surgery and that set him back from participating in a strenuous exercise regimen.

He found himself stuck at an undesirable weight. So late last year, Wiesman decided to reach out for help from a local clinic that is offering a new high-tech method for assessing caloric intake, physical activity and sleep. The information then can be used to help people better understand what is thwarting their weight loss, and how to modify their behavior to achieve their goals.

Called SenseWear body monitoring, the system was created by BodyMedia in Pittsburgh, the same company that developed the Bodybugg armband used by participants on "The Biggest Loser."

Unlike the TV version, though, the SenseWear armband was designed to be used in a clinical setting.

"To lose weight, you have to burn more calories than you take in," said Donna Schneider, an exercise physiologist at First Health of Andover, a practice using the program.

That may sound like a no-brainer, but many people don't realize how much they actually eat in a day. And, Schneider said, metabolism slows down when people are in their 40s and 50s.



Donna Schneider of FirstHealth of Andover fits Jim Wiesman with the SenseWear® monitoring arm band he will wear for a week as it records his physiological data. FirstHealth is working with Wiesman to create a weight loss plan for him by using the data the Sensewear® records. Friday, December 14, 2007 Carl Susso/Eagle Tribune.

"People who are stuck and frustrated with their weight need to pay attention to food consumed," she said.

Clients using SenseWear log into the program's Web site and enter the foods they eat each day. Meanwhile, the armband, measures calories burned, body temperature, stress levels and sleep efficiency.

Wiesman said he found the program fascinating.

"It gives such a mass of information and makes you aware of what you consume each day."

Wiesman wore the armband for a week in December at a cost of \$200 for an initial and follow-up consultation, and the equipment.

At the initial consultation Schneider weighed him on an InBody520 machine - much like a scale - that provides a body composition analysis. With that information, Schneider was able to tell him how many calories he could eat and accompanied by how much exercise to lose weight.

Each day, he attached the armband to his personal computer with a USB cable and downloaded its findings. Using a password, Schneider was able to log into Wiesman's account from her computer, and see what he ate and how active he was during the week.

"When I came back in after a week, Donna asked me what I did on that Saturday," Wiesman said. "I told her I was hanging sheet rock in my daughter's house."

That was the only day the armband measured Wiesman doing vigorous activity. And that was a problem, Schneider said, because each day people should get 30 minutes of moderate activity and 15 minutes of vigorous activity.

"Moderate activity is pretty much activities of daily living," Schneider said, explaining the difference between the two. "Vigorous activity means breaking a sweat and increasing your heart rate. You should be able to talk, but not sing during this type of activity."

It's also important to understand sleep patterns, which the armband records, too, Schneider said. Studies have shown that sleep loss may increase hunger and affect the body's metabolism, which also can affect weight loss.

Wiesman found the information valuable and now is working to succeed at the exercise and diet regimen Schneider provided. It's still work, he said.

"I wish I could wear the armband for three months," Wiesman said. "It really keeps you honest."

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