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How to get healthier and lose 165 pounds in seven weeks

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Back in April, Nick Callan was reading Feeling Fit, and saw one of his co-workers receiving a check for winning season two of the Biggest Loser contest, held at the Cultural Center of Charlotte County. The combination of winning money, and having his parents around to watch his 18 month old daughter grow up were the incentives needed for team "TNT+Me" to form.

Tom and Tee Callan enjoyed eating out. Steaks, fast food and fried items were everyday meals. A typical day of eating for the two of them combined was close to over 10,000 calories a day. Tom was also on nine different medications, a smoker plus needing breathing treatments at night. Tee ate what she wanted, and slept a lot. Her heart condition had her using her defibrillator and pacemaker to work at 100 percent and not able to have surgery for a new heart.

Nick Callan had put on weight, and had learned the love of food from his parents. The extra weight weighed on his energy levels. Tee's best friend Melissa Ellison hated feeling fat. With little encouragement needed, All four formed a team — and a bond — vowing to begin a healthier lifestyle. Tom decided to diet by cutting calories. Not big on exercising, he decided to try losing weight by only eating 1,000 calories a day. Tom also quit smoking. "If I am going to get healthier, I might as well do it now," Tom joked. After seven weeks, he is 63 pounds lighter and is now off his breathing treatment and is hoping to hear when the doctor say he will be off all medications after his next visit. For Nick, it's all about the competition. "I'd be lying if I said I wasn't in it for the money," he said. Although he didn't have much faith with his mother sticking to a diet, he said he is so proud of her for the changes she has made. "I didn't think she would lose anything and now she has lost almost the same amount as me," he said. Tee would work up a sweat taking less than 20 steps from her house to the car. Tee needs a new heart, and surgery cannot be done until she loses weight. Feeling stuck in a downward spiral, Tee has taken the opportunity to become healthier. Now with her best friend, Tee, in only 7 weeks is up to walking and running almost four miles!

Tee has been smart in her dieting. Her first goal was to lose 25 pounds. Her second goal was to 15 more. By counting calories, fat and fiber, Tee is getting close to hitting her third goal of losing an additional 15 pounds, which is a total of 45 pounds. Tee has been suffering from a bad heart, and is so excited that her pacemaker has been "tweaked down." She still has a long way to go. "I won't be healthy enough until my doctor says I can have my heart surgery."

Melissa Ellison is the team motivator. "Being fat is a choice," she said. "I was done being fat." Melissa won't take any excuses from her team. She was so ready to start losing weight that she didn't even wait for the contest to begin. "I lost 15 pounds before the competition even started," she explained. She has just reached her second goal, losing a total of 30 pounds.

There are no secrets in how these four teammates have been losing weight. Tom, Nick, Tee + Melissa are what this competition is all about. No secret diet pills. No starvation. Plain old dieting and exercise are two parts of the combination of success. The third part of the equation is team work. Every Monday morning, this team weighs in together, and has their "cheat" meal together afterward. Cheating means adding one piece of cheese to an omelet for Tee and a piece of toast for Melissa. They are by each other's side to talk about tips, and to discuss the highs and lows. The challenge has built a family that now shops together, and eats together, and makes time for each other. To quote Melissa, "There are no excuses. It is a choice." So, what will your choice be?

Weekly activity from the Charlotte County Health Department: Try a new type of dancing, such as square, folk, or ballroom dancing — take a class with others and learn how. Visit charlottechd.com for more suggestions and helpful hints.

Weekly tip from Jeff Louda, certified personal trainer: Everyone should have their own workout routine. Sometimes what works for one person, may not work for another person. Understand that your body is unique, and speak with a trainer to ensure you are getting the best workout for your body.

A discussion group is available on the Cultural Center of Charlotte County Facebook page. Find tips and suggestions by visiting http://tinyurl.com/m35 g9n

New fitness salon membership $10 a month for the evening membership, which includes 5 p.m.-7 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 8 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturdays. Here are the results from week seven, along with the total weight loss percentage: 3 C's and a D: 0.2%, 4.7% 4 Weighs To Win: 0.0%, 4.4% All Stars: 0.2%, 4.6% BBW'S: 0.0%, 2.4% Beauties And The Beast: 1.7%, 11.5% Becoming Beauties: 0.0%, 1.9% Belly Buster: 0.4%, 6.0% Big &Sexy: 1.2%, 11.0% Big Women: 0.3%, 4.3% Born To Lose: 0.0%, 4.5% CHUBBA WUBBAS: 0.1%, 2.0% Chubby Cheeks: 0.1%, 4.0% Chubby Chicks: -0.3%, 3.6% Contenders, The: 0.2%, 5.4% D-CHUB: 0.0%, 0.3% Fabulous Four: 0.0%, 1.4% Famished Four, The: 0.0%, 1.5% Fat & Sassy: 0.0%, 4.1% Feisty Moms: 0.1%, 1.7% Git'R Done: 0.5%, 6.7% Here Today-Gone Tomorrow: 0.0%, 1.6% Holy Losers: 0.0%, 2.9% Le Petit Four: 0.9%, 3.4% Mad Dogs: -0.6%, 4.0% Mail Maams: 0.8%, 4.3% Melting Pots: 0.0%, 2.4% MGB4: 0.1%, 4.6% MoJoe's: 0.4%, 4.2% Mom's Turn: 0.0%, 0.8% Mor Cailins: 0.0%, 2.2% Motivated Mommas: 0.0%, 5.4% Motown Momma's: 0.1%, 1.6% Muggles: 1.3%, 4.9% No pain no gain: 0.0%, 9.2% Patticakes And The Bakerman: -0.3%, 1.4% Pegenas: 0.0%, 2.1% Plus Size Divas: 0.4%, 6.9% Pounds Away: 0.2%, 7.9% Pretenders: 5.9%, 5.9% Skinny Minnies, The: 0.3%, 1.4% Slenderellas: 0.5%, 4.9% Stealth Bombers: -0.2%, 4.7% Steeler Girls: 0.0%, 3.1% Teene Boppers: 0.0%, 3.0% Think Small: 0.0%, 3.0% Thunder Thighs: 0.4%, 3.8% TNT + Me: 2.1%, 16.6% U Gotta Believe: 0.2%, 3.9% Waist N. Aweigh: 0.9%, 3.3% We Will Carry Less: 0.5%, 3.6% Weight warriors: 0.1%, 4.0% Whiskey Babes, The: 0.2%, 2.2% Zebras: 0.4%, 4.9% Total: 0.3%, 4.3%

Congratulations to winner of the highest percentage of weight loss for week seven: David Rasdall from team "Pretenders" who lost 3.6 percent. Dave has won a free month at the Fitness Salon at the Cultural Center of Charlotte County, a gift bag from Port Charlotte Natural Foods, and a Florida State cooler from AllPro Home Health, LLC.

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