

## Virginia Cooperative Extension Service

VIRGINIA TECH AND VIRGINIA STATE

VIRGINIA'S LAND GRANT UNIVERSITIES

TO EACH EXTENSION AGENT WITH RESPONSIBILITIES IN FAMILY RESOURCES

DEB FOLLOW-UP

Dear Extension Agent:

A "follow-up" program to the Diet, Exercise, and Behavior Modification (DEB) Program has been developed by Janette Taper, Extension Specialist, Foods and Nutrition. We have long recognized that the ten-week period scheduled for actual group meetings of DEB participants is simply not long enough for individuals to make permanent changes in eating and activity patterns, some of which were developed in childhood. DEB participants often leave the program at the end of the tenth lesson feeling that they are just beginning to grasp the diet plan and are, thus, left on their own at a time when they need support more than ever. This feeling of abandonment has resulted in many individuals giving up and regaining any weight which had been lost up to that point. To avoid this sense of frustration and failure, we have developed a follow-up program whereby you, the Extension Agent, can stay in contact with your DEB participants by mail. This is often the only encouragement needed. A monthly letter lets the individual know that you are still concerned with his/her weight control program and are still offering your help and support.

We have developed twenty-four newsletters. They will be available through the Distribution Center. They are designed to be sent out on a monthly basis for a two year period, although individuals may choose not to receive them for the total time. DEB members can start the follow-up series at any month. Each newsletter is divided into two distinct sections--DEB (Diet, Exercise, and Behavior Modification) and RAP (Record, Analyze, and Plan). In the DEB section we will offer new tips or reinforce old ones on diet, exercise, and behavior modification activities. In the RAP section we give the participant an opportunity to actively take responsibility for his/her continued weight control. Each individual is asked to record what has been learned from this control program, and then to plan how information will be used over the next month until a second newsletter is received. The only information that the individual will be asked to return to you is a record of his/her weight. This will give you some indication of how valuable the follow-up contact is in helping individuals continue to lose weight or to maintain their achieved weight goal.

If you have any questions concerning the DEB Follow-up Newsletters, contact Janette Taper, Room 206 Wallace Hall, VPI&SU, Blacksburg, VA 24061, 703-961-5549.

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Sample Introductory Letter  
(to be sent on completion of the DEB Program)

Dear DEB Member:

As indicated at the organizational meeting of the Diet, Exercise, and Behavior Modification (DEB) Program, participants will be able to take part in a monthly follow-up program.

Starting next month, if you choose to take part in the follow-up program, I will be sending you a newsletter every month for the next two years. Each newsletter will include tips on diet, exercise, and behavior modification. We will review some of the material already covered in the DEB sessions and offer new information to help reinforce the "old." I hope that these "follow-up" lessons will serve as an incentive for you to continue your weight loss (if you haven't yet reached your weight loss goal) or to control your weight now that you have achieved your goal. You may continue in the follow-up program for a total of two years. Some of you may wish to drop out before that time if you feel enough confidence in your ability to control your weight on your own.

I do hope that this follow-up contact provides you with the support you may need as we are no longer meeting together for group sessions, and I wish you the very best in your individual weight control program. If you wish to begin receiving the DEB Follow-Up Newsletters, please complete the form below and return it to my office.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Extension Agent

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DEB FOLLOW-UP

I would like to receive the DEB Follow-Up Newsletters.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sample Completion Letter

(To be sent with last newsletter on completion  
of the DEB Follow-up Program)

Dear DEB Member:

This month's newsletter is the last in a series of twenty-four newsletters on diet, exercise, and behavior modification techniques. I am pleased that you decided to take part in this follow-up program and hope that you have benefited from it. The diet and exercise tips you have been practicing over the past two years or so should now be almost second nature to you. Now that you will no longer be receiving a monthly reminder from me, you need to make an extra effort to keep alive all the good eating and exercise patterns you have hopefully developed. Remember, weight control is a lifetime project. Don't give up and slip back into bad habits. If I can be of any further help to you as you continue your weight control program, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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Extension Agent