

## TOPS Offers New Motivational Video To Help Reduce Obesity

Written by Kimberly Greene

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**MILWAUKEE, WI** – TOPS Club (Take Off Pounds Sensibly), the nation's oldest weight-loss support organization, has released a new video to help educate people on the dangers of obesity and being overweight. The video also seeks to motivate viewers through a series of dramatic testimonials from TOPS members who have lost substantial weight through the TOPS nutrition and exercise plans and other members' support. The video is available to view at the TOPS website, [www.tops.org](http://www.tops.org).

Narrated by Nicholas "Dr. Nick" Yphantides, M.D., M.P.H., an executive medical consultant to the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency and co-chair of San Diego County's Childhood Obesity Initiative, the video also features interviews with researchers from the TOPS Obesity and Metabolic Research Center at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. TOPS, a nonprofit organization, has been actively involved in the clinical study of obesity since 1965 and has contributed over \$6.5 million to the Medical College of Wisconsin in support of these efforts.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), two-thirds of the U.S. population is now overweight and as many as 72 million adults are considered obese. About one in three American kids and teens is overweight or obese, nearly triple the rate of 1963. Obese children also have an 80% chance of staying obese their entire lives. Research has shown that, for adults, as weight increases, the risks for the following preventable, chronic conditions also increase: coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, certain cancers, hypertension, stroke, and more. Obesity costs U.S. companies an estimated \$45 billion per year and 39 million lost workdays.

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To help temper this trend and increase overall wellness for its members, TOPS promotes lasting, affordable weight management with a philosophy that combines healthy eating, regular exercise, wellness information, and support from others at weekly chapter meetings. Founded and headquartered in Milwaukee, Wis., more than 63 years ago, TOPS has approximately 170,000 members in about 10,000 chapters throughout the United States and Canada.

Recent findings from what is believed to be the largest study of a weight-loss program in the United States indicate that TOPS is effective and associated with clinically significant weight loss among participants who remain in the program for at least one year.

According to a study published in "Obesity," the official journal of The Obesity Society, TOPS members who participated over a consecutive period of one to three years lost between 5.9% and 7.1% of their initial weight. People who remained in the program maintained that weight loss for up to three years.

In addition to regular group meetings designed to reinforce healthy habits, the TOPS program includes a six-week "quick-start" guide, "My Day One," and TOPS' lifestyle guide, "The Choice Is Mine." Membership also includes a one-year subscription to "TOPS News," the organization's members-only magazine.

The researchers noted a substantial difference in cost between nonprofit TOPS and commercial weight-loss programs, like Weight Watchers and Jenny Craig. TOPS' annual membership fee is \$26 in the United States and \$30 in Canada, plus nominal chapter fees (on average, \$5 per month) collected for local chapter expenses. There are no special foods to purchase. Visitors are welcome to attend their first TOPS meeting free of charge. To find a local chapter, go to [ww.tops.org](http://ww.tops.org) or call 1-800-932-8677.

As noted in the new video, members of TOPS lost a combined total of 431 tons in 2009. Regular chapter meetings, awards programs, and regional events comprise a system of recognition and positive reinforcement for TOPS members on the wellness journey. Goal weights are set in consultation with members' health-care professionals. About 80,000 members have achieved significant weight loss and are maintaining it with the support of TOPS and the support its members provide for each other. Maintaining one's weight loss is believed to be one of the most challenging parts of successful weight management.

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For additional information about TOPS and to view the new motivational video, go to [www.tops.org](http://www.tops.org)

For more information on the TOPS chapters in your area, visit [www.tops.org](http://www.tops.org) and click “Find a Meeting.” If you would like to speak with a local representative from TOPS, please contact us.

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