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# Report: Yo-yo dieting causes less harm than once thought

Natasha Shepard  
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

Repeated weight loss and gain, commonly known as yo-yo dieting, may not be as dangerous as once thought, according to a report released by the National Task Force on the Prevention and Treatment of Obesity.

The report, published in the Oct. 19 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association, concluded that previous research methods lacked a "standardized definition for weight cycling." According to the report, previous research indicating that yo-yo dieting has adverse health effects may not be credible.

Kristen Olmos, Student Health Center HIV/Nutrition Counselor, said that the report challenges the former research done by people considered the "experts—people who have devoted their careers to studying weight loss and obesity."

"Despite the numerous studies of weight cycling available ... fundamental questions remain unanswered," the report said. Previous research failed to clarify important terms like "weight cycling," and the populations studied weren't controlled enough, the report said.

"This report was retrospective, analyzing the research that had already been done," Olmos said. "This report calls for future studies in order to come to a better solution."

Previous research doesn't adequately support claims that yo-yo dieting causes health problems such as decreased metabolic rate, increased body fat composition and heart problems, the report said.

"The majority of available data suggest that weight cycling in animals does not independently affect any parameter of energy balance (food intake, body composition, or energy expenditure)," the report said. "Although it is commonly contended that weight cycling in animals reduces fat-free mass and increases body fat over time, most investigators have reported that weight cycling does not increase body fat."

According to the report, there are benefits from losing five or ten pounds by any method because even a small weight loss can significantly reduce health risks. "In contrast with weight cycling, obesity is associated with increased risks," the report said.

However, the report makes an important distinction between the effects of obesity and just being a few pounds overweight.

"Weight cycling and weight loss may have both differing causes and effects in obese and non obese individuals, and caution should be taken in applying the findings of population-based studies to obese patients," the report said.

Yet, the report said that in addition to physical effects, psychological effects from weight loss should also be considered.

"Repeated failed attempts at permanent weight loss are obviously distressing," the report said. "Unfortunately, few well-controlled studies have assessed the impact of weight cycling on psychological functioning."

Olmos said that yo-yo dieting is a problem at the University. A common pattern is that someone loses weight and begins to gain self-confidence, but since food is their "comfort," when they start to gain the weight back their problem is compounded.

"People with better self-esteem have better success at weight loss," Olmos said.

"Students are concerned about fat intake and gaining weight," she said. "Sometimes they don't know what constitutes a healthy diet, or they think they can't attain it. Sometimes they feel so overwhelmed that they just won't eat. That's harmful psychologically and emotionally. They're setting themselves up for failure."

Ilene Thompson, Weight Watchers supervisor for southern Oregon, said one of the dangers of yo-yo dieting is that people gain more weight back than they lose.

"One thing we know is that when you lose ten pounds (without changing your eating habits), you gain 15 back," said Thompson, who has maintained a 1972 weight loss of 50 pounds. "Then you have five more pounds to lose. Dieting is never the way to go. It's important to learn how to eat for a lifetime."

While Olmos said she feels the Task Force research "makes sense," she said, "At this point, I wouldn't necessarily base (my advice) on this study. If they just wanted to lose ten or 20 pounds, I wouldn't encourage them to do it unless they were ready to make a life-long change."

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**Fee:** Only share the gas

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Registration: Notice board in Outdoor Program or



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UO Student Health Center  
Health Education Program



## Sports Action may be linked to fraud



RICHMOND, British Columbia (AP) — The British Columbia Lottery Corp. suspended betting in its Sports Action over-under game Tuesday, saying criminals might be using it to launder money.

Ticket sales by-noon Tuesday had reached \$120,000, six times higher than normal single-day sales, said corporation spokeswoman Ingrid Coleridge.

The game was suspended through Thursday while the huge jump in sales is investigated.

Thousands of hockey-starved sports gamblers swamped the corporation's head office in Kamloops and district offices in Richmond and Victoria on Tuesday afternoon after betting was suspended.

Coleridge said lottery officials are concerned about possible money-laundering schemes because the average payout on Sports Action over-under is 60 percent of the initial investment.

Gamblers betting over-under in Sports Action bet on whether a game will result in a higher or lower number of points than the corporation's predicted total.

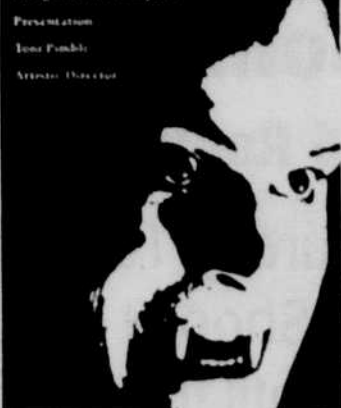
For example, Tuesday's NBA exhibition game between the New York Knicks and Washing-

ton Bullets had an over-under line of 190.5 points. A ticket buyer would have to predict whether the two teams' total scores would be more or less than that figure.

A gambler has to correctly predict the over-under on at least three games to win. Winnings depend on how much the gambler bet.

"We're just taking precautions," Coleridge said. "We've suspended the game on over-under only so it will give us some time to investigate and find out exactly what's happening and why there's been such a jump in sales. At this point, it's just speculation."

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## ET ALS

MEETINGS

College Democrats will meet tonight at 7 in Room 159 Straub. For more information, call 341-1414.

MISCELLANEOUS

ASUO will sponsor an information session on Ballot Measure 16 tonight at 7 in Room 302 Gerlinger. For more information, call 346-0629.

Vietnamese Student Association will sponsor a speech by students who visited Vietnam last summer. The speech will take place tonight from 6:30 to 8 in the Multicultural Center in the basement of the EMU. For more information, call 346-9487.

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