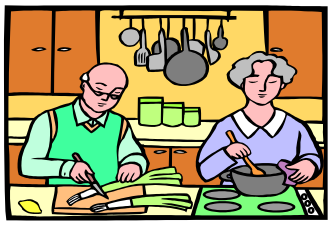
MOVE!

What If My Partner or Spouse Isn't Helpful?



Many people find that, for whatever reason, their life partner or spouse isn't particularly helpful when they are trying to lose weight. Perhaps the person who prepares the food in your home continues to fix greasy, fattening food, and to serve very large portions. Or, that person makes so many demands on your time that finding time for exercise seems next to impossible. Or they may criticize, discourage, or make fun of your efforts to lose weight. This is really tough to deal with… Here are some tips:

- Making changes in how two people interact is often very uncomfortable, and old habits have a way of continuing just because they are comfortable. Or, if you change, then it means that your partner has to change too, and that is kind of threatening. Your partner may not be sabotaging you on purpose. Try to be understanding.

- In a calm and respectful way (not an angry way!), ask the person to help you, and actually tell them what they can do to assist you instead of what they have been doing. Be patient. Old habits die hard, so you may need to have this talk with your partner many times.

- Resolve to "work your own program". That means that you take personal responsibility for what you do, what you eat, your physical activity, and so on. It is not somebody else's responsibility, and not somebody else's fault if things don't go quite right. Nobody else can do it for you. You have to do it yourself in spite of whatever other people do around you, for you, or to you.

- Seek encouragement and support from others. Extremely helpful in any case. Read the handout on getting support from others.

- Practice being "assertive". This means saying "no" firmly and repeatedly, or whatever else you need to say to maintain your personal program of weight control and physical activity.