



Contact: Alice Greene
pr@fitbeyond40.com
978-465-3555 x5

Television Promotes Unsafe Weight Loss

Contestants Could Suffer Negative Consequences from Reality TV Contests

Newburyport, MA, March 18, 2005 – New hit shows like primetime television’s, The Biggest Loser that promote extreme weight loss through radical, physical workouts and severely controlled eating techniques may be leading people down a self-destructive path. The ultimate goal of each of the participants on The Biggest Loser is to lose more weight faster than all the others. They will do whatever it takes to beat out the other contestants, even if it means putting themselves through a degrading, demoralizing and even risky mental and physical process. What these people don’t know and what the media is not telling the general public watching shows such as this is that the weight loss they experience is for most, only temporary and could potentially lead to a variety of health and emotional problems.

“The rapid weight loss goals that contestants strive to meet in order to win The Biggest Loser title puts them at risk for suffering overuse injuries, heart attack, slowed metabolisms and post-traumatic backlash due to the extreme nature of the exercise regimen,” said Alice Greene, president of Fit Beyond 40. People on the show loose up to 19 pounds in a single week and the personal trainers and the host of the show promotes this weight loss as a positive and praise worthy accomplishment. In the real world certified personal trainers will tell you that it is unsafe to lose any more than 1-2 pounds in a single week. People on the show are losing up to nine times that almost every week. At one point during the first airing of the show a contestant was looked down upon for “only” losing 7 pounds in a particular week. Two other contestants were thought to have cheated since they didn’t lose any weight during that same week. “When you lose that much weight in such a short amount of time the body is clearly in starvation mode, which slows down metabolism,” said Greene. “As a result, the weight loss is primarily water and muscle – not fat. Once the program is over, the contestants will gain all the weight back. It is no different than doing a crash diet.”

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“This show is a disservice, and it is sending a message to viewers that what it takes to lose weight is an extreme approach that is painful, humiliating, depriving and brutal,” said Greene. “These people have not learned how to incorporate exercise and balanced eating into their lives. They’ll forever equate exercise and healthy eating with a negative experience they’ll likely never want to repeat again.” Rapid weight loss programs don’t give people the guidance they need to create safe, progressive exercise routines, to overcome the issues that lead to overeating, or to achieve sustained consistency for long term weight loss and health.

Fit Beyond 40 has developed several motivational fitness conditioning programs that are specifically designed to be moderate, progressive and tuned to the client’s physical limitations. “People over forty are prone to injury, fatigue and pain”, said Greene. “Many of our clients have been previously injured playing sports, working with personal trainers or from working out at a club or gym. Our objective is to help them create a fitness program that provides maximal results with minimal injury, by progressing them safely and slowly at the pace that is right for them. Our techniques are based on the principles of physical therapy, personal training, Intuitive Eating and core stabilization. We work with them to achieve higher levels of fitness at the pace that is right for them and to achieve balanced eating practices that don’t lead to deprivation and judgment, so they can enjoy the process and maintain it for the rest of their lives.”

About Fit Beyond 40

Fit Beyond 40 is a leading provider of fitness and intuitive eating coaching by phone for people who want to get and stay fit beyond 40. Fitness coaching by phone is founded on the principles of progression, by starting people out at their appropriate fitness level and increasing their duration, frequency and intensity in small increments to minimize fatigue, overuse injury and physical trauma. Intuitive eating is based on eating all things in moderation in response to listening to the body’s hunger and fullness levels.

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