

### **The Journey of the Belts: Embracing ‘Skill-power’ on the Road to Weight Loss**

CVMC’s Weight Management Center has introduced a new program to help motivate patients in their commitment to weight loss: The Journey of the Belts. This program offers stair-stepped levels of achievement named after the colors of martial arts belts. Each color signifies the completion of various goals within each patient’s customized weight management plan. When goals within one level are reached, the patient advances to the next color level and tackles a new set.

“I developed this program as an outgrowth of my previous experience in the martial arts,” says Vondell Clark, M.D., medical director of the Weight Management Center. Dr. Clark was a martial arts instructor while in college and has combined the disciplines of martial arts and behavioral psychology with the latest research on obesity. “Goal setting and achieving milestones are integral parts of the transformation of a person into what they have the potential to be.”

According to Dr. Clark, the philosophy of the belt system originates from “Kaizen,” or continuous improvement. “The basic theory is that nature is a black belt and we are white belts,” Dr. Clark explains. “To be successful in the continuing battle with nature requires ‘skill-power’, not ‘willpower’.”

Following are the program’s belt levels and what they signify:

- **White:** Initial assessment, patient history, physical and EKG.
- **Yellow:** Two doctor visits, two dietitian visits, nutrition/activity/behavioral goal setting.
- **Orange:** 5% weight loss, cardiovascular training, individual nutritional plan, individualized behavior goals.
- **Green:** 10% weight loss, cardiovascular and resistance training, individualized nutrition plan, journaling, individualized behavior goals.
- **Red:** Individualized weight goal, cardiovascular, resistance and flexibility, journaling, individualized nutrition plan, individualized behavior goals, mindfulness. After the green belt level, the emphasis changes from losing weight (diet, exercise) to becoming mindful of what and how we are eating. There is a change in eating from “consuming” to “nurturing”.
- **Brown:** Individualized weight goal, cardiovascular, resistance and flexibility, journaling, individualized nutrition plan, individualized behavior goals, and time management strategies. Most people do not give themselves the space and time to achieve success.
- **Black:** Completion of required knowledge of nutrition, activity, mindfulness, time management, and stress reduction techniques. Individuals take part in a small group cooking class and presentation of their success stories.

For more information about the Journey of the Belts or CVMC’s Weight Management Center, please call 828/326-3410.