



Dear Chapters –

This document has been provided for use at your chapter for new membership packets if you choose. Please review thoroughly to make certain that the information contained within is correct for your specific chapter and adjust if necessary. You will also need to insert:

- ❖ Your chapter name
- ❖ Your chapter dues
- ❖ When your dues are payable
- ❖ Your meeting day and time
- ❖ Your weigh-in time
- ❖ Awards and contests for your chapter
- ❖ Chapter officers
- ❖ Your field staff information

Going forward, please make sure that the information you give to your new members is current and up-to-date including any updates in membership fees, etc., from TOPS Headquarters.

We hope this document will be useful to you and your chapter.

Your **TOPS**® Field Staff

Welcome to TOPS!

We congratulate you for taking the first step on the road to a healthier you.

You are now a member of TOPS # _____ an affiliate of TOPS CLUB, Inc. We are so glad to have you be a part of our chapter.

My Day One – A Ready, Set, Go Guide for Healthy Living

This is included in your folder. It outlines the steps to a new beginning, the steps to a new you! It is full of information to help you get started on the journey to weight loss success. A member of our chapter will assist you with explaining these steps and answering any of your questions.

The Choice is Mine and the Choice is Mine Workbook

At the time of joining, you have the option of purchasing either or both of these publications at the current price and availability. The chapter may have copies available to purchase also. If you purchase at the time of joining and indicate so on the application, TOPS Headquarters will ship directly to you.

Membership Number

You will receive your membership number via email, if you supplied your email on the application and there is no one else with similar personal information in the TOPS database. Otherwise, you will find your membership number on the mailing label of your issue of TOPS NEWS.

Accessing info at tops.org website

Once you have a membership number, you will be able to access many more tools on the TOPS website at www.tops.org . Your login is your membership number and the password is “first two letters of your first name and first four letters of your last name). As an example, Linda Patterson’s password is ‘lipatt’. If you have a three letter last name, your password would be the first three letters of your first name and the three letters of your last name (Jackie Low’s password would be ‘jaclow’).

Currently available to members online:

- * My Day One – if you would prefer reading on your computer or the chapter had run out of copies
- * My Self Care Classes – weekly classes to successful weight loss requiring 10-15 minutes on the computer
- * My Weight Record – a way to keep track of your losses – this is your personal record, no one sees it
- * TOPS News current and past issues

PLUS many more sources of information and motivation. We also have a website for all states in our region which you can access at www.tops wonders.com . Your Coordinator and Area Captain’s newsletters, along

with information on local TOPS Events can be found on the tab for your state. Go on and explore - you will find something that will help you on your journey.

Our Chapters' Dedication to You

Our goal is to support you as you Take and Keep Off Pounds Sensibly. We are here to lend a shoulder to lean on and a heart to listen with. Each of us is traveling down the same path, encountering the same struggles. Together, we can be successful in our journey to a healthier YOU! Remember... We're Here for You!

Chapter Guidelines

Registration and Dues

The cost for annual membership is \$28.00 (effective 1-1-2012). This fee is sent by the chapter to your Coordinator, who processes your application and then forwards the fees to TOPS Club, Inc. Your membership entitles you to a year's subscription of TOPS NEWS, which is filled with motivating stories and information about TOPS events.

You will receive a renewal notice each year about 7 weeks prior to the month of your renewal date. Please bring your renewal slip into your chapter, along with the renewal fee and your chapter will process for you.

Our chapter dues are currently \$___ per month. This money goes to pay for the awards given at chapter level, for the expenses the chapter incurs in presenting programs and providing a fun and loving atmosphere for you and your fellow chapter members. These are due _____.

Meeting Times

Our Weigh-in time begins at _____ each _____. The meeting begins promptly at _____ and usually lasts about one hour. You are encouraged to stay for the meeting/program, however we understand that sometimes you may be only able to weigh-in and then leave. This is better than not weighing at all. If you feel that you may have gained weight and aren't ready to face the scales, you do have the option of attending the meeting without weighing in – in which case your weight chart is marked AB for Absent. You will not be eligible of awards that week and if you have four absences in a row, you will be ineligible for annual weight loss awards.

If a meeting is cancelled, notification will be given as stated in our by-laws. Otherwise, a sign will be placed on the door to let you know that the meeting was cancelled with a phone number to call for information.

Absences

If you are unable to weigh-in or attend a meeting, please contact one of the officers prior to the meeting time. This will be considered an EXCUSED absence.

It is important to let your chapter know when you are not able to attend, as having four consecutive unexcused absences makes you ineligible for any of the chapter, state and international contests that year.

Setting a Goal Weight

Your goal weight is to be determined by you and a licensed healthcare professional (medical doctor, osteopath, chiropractor, psychiatrist, registered nurse, nurse practitioner, physician's assistant, nutritionist and registered dietitian).

In determining your goal weight, remember that after reaching your goal weight and becoming a KOPS (Keep Off Pounds Sensibly), you will have a leeway of: Seven (7) pounds below that goal and three (3) pounds above that goal. You may want to consider setting your goal weight just a little above the weight you want to stay at. You must remain in Leeway of your goal to maintain your KOPS status. Although you will not officially need a goal slip until the day you reach your goal, it is important to get a specific goal weight for you to focus on. At your next visit to your physician, request with him/her for your goal statement.

Goal Weight Statement

Your health care professional should write your specific goal weight on his/her letterhead stationery or prescription blank, date it and sign it. If they will only give you a range, say 150 to 155 pounds, which is okay. You may decide on any "goal" within that range. As an example, say you decide that 155 should be your goal as you want to stay in the 150-155 range. Tell your weight recorder of your decision and he/she will write "155" to the side of the range the health care provider wrote down.

When you reach your goal weight, this goal slip will be sent to your Coordinator to process who will then forward to TOPS Club, Inc. When you are officially registered as a KOPS at TOPS Headquarters, you will receive a KOPS pin mailed directly to you. If you do not receive the pin, please contact your Area Coordinator.

You may turn in your goal slip to the weight recorders any time PRIOR to reaching your goal weight. Your official KOPS date will be the date you reached your goal OR the first weigh in after the date on the goal slip, whichever applies.

The Meeting

Each meeting will normally consist of the following:

Confidential weigh in by appointed weight recorders

Call to order and TOPS/KOPS pledges

Roll Call - The weight recorder will call your name and you will be asked to respond with whether you lost or gained the past week. We applaud those who have lost and give words of encouragement to those who have gained. We understand the hardest time to come and weigh is when you think you have a gain. Please come anyway, for this is when you need our support the most. We've all had gains along the way and know exactly how you feel. Often times you may think you have gained, but in reality, come in with a loss.

Officer Reports and Business Announcements - These may or may not be given weekly, but are given at least monthly. This includes a treasurer's report and possibly the reading of the minutes from the previous meeting.

The Program - Each week we have a program or presentation by one of our members or guest speakers. The topics vary from nutritional facts, stress management, emotional eating, food choices, label reading to exercise. Any member is more than welcome to share any information they feel would benefit the whole group. They may present it themselves or relay it to one of the officers at any time.

Education, motivation and inspiration are all part of our goal to make this support group special.

Determining your Health Plan

It is important that you and your health care provider have a clear understanding of the best way for you to lose weight and get fit. TOPS is a physician-based program where you and your health care provider discuss and set the health plan best for you. TOPS Club, Inc. does have an exchange program based on the American Diabetic Association's guideline that you can follow. However, you and your health care provider are ultimately in charge of setting your plan. We would encourage you to discuss the TOPS exchange program with your health care provide to make sure the plan is right for you.

Awards and Contests

TOPS has many different competitions and awards that are intended to keep you motivated and have fun too. With your first weigh in you began competing at the state and international levels. Members are divided into different weight divisions based on their first weigh in of the calendar year and compete with those members in the same 'division'. These and other awards will be explained to you by your chapter's officers.

In our chapter, we have the following awards system. You will receive recognition for:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

We also have contests for walking, keeping food journals, etc. going throughout the year. We encourage everyone to participate; as it will help you stay focused and have some fun as well. The contests are designed to be friendly and positive.

Asking for Help

In your folder you will see a letter addressed to your family. We hope that it will help your family understand how they can give you support and how important their support is for your success.

Also enclosed is our chapter's membership list. Please feel free to call any of your fellow members for advice or support between meetings.

(If your chapter assigns new members a fellow member to help them get started, here would be a perfect place to give that member's info –phone number and email address)

Seven Ways to Size up your Servings

Measure food portion so you know exactly how much food you are consuming. When a food scale or measuring cups are not handy, you can still estimate your portion.

- Three ounces of meat is about the size of a deck of cards.
- A medium fruit is about the size of a tennis ball.
- One ounce of cheese is about the size of four stacked dice.
- Half a cup of ice cream is about the size of a racquetball or tennis ball.
- One cup of mashed potatoes or broccoli is about the size of a clenched fist or if you have large hands, half the size of a clenched fist.
- One teaspoon of butter or peanut butter is about the size of the tip of your thumb or index finger if you have large hands.
- One ounce of nuts equals a handful, not a heaping handful, just enough to cover the palm of your hand in one layer.

Experiment: Measure out one ounce of nuts and place in your hand so you can visually see how much an ounce

Experiment: Measure out a serving size of dry cereal and pour into different sized bowls and a coffee mug so you can visually see how much a serving actually is.

Contact names and Phone numbers:

Here is a list of people who are here to help with any questions or concerns that you may have. Please contact any of our chapter officers if you are going to be absent from a meeting.

Leader –

Co-Leader -

Secretary –

Treasurer –

Weight Recorders –

Your Regional Director is: Bev Staniak, 715.343.1619 or bev01@charter.net

Your Coordinator is:

Your Area Captain is:

Included in this packet is also: Chapter Membership list, TOPS Rules, TOPS Terminology sheet, a sample of a food chart, and *(list anything else you add to the new member packet)*.

To the Families of TOPS members

Now that your family member has joined TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly), they need your cooperation more than ever before. We hope this letter will help our members in gaining moral support on the home front. Following are some suggestions that you can undertake to strengthen the family's understanding of the challenges your family member faces.

- Give only positive words of encouragement. Never criticize them for what she/he consumes. They will be learning more and more on how to make proper food choices. The benefit to you, is that you will also be eating a lot more healthier.
- Please be patient with them. They will have good days and bad days as they overcome the challenge of changing old habits. They will ultimately be healthier in the long run, but they need your support now more than ever.
- When they do start losing weight, praise them sincerely. Show pride in their efforts to create a new healthier lifestyle. If they start to backslide, give them an extra dose of support. Show them that you have faith in them and you will stick by them EVERY day.
- Encourage them to attend their TOPS meetings. This is one of the most important parts of the program. They need to be accountable as well as getting the group support that they need.
- Ask your family member if they want you to ask how they did when they come home from their meeting. If so, make a habit of asking and come up with ways to support them.
- Make getting healthy a family affair. Whether it be trying new foods or trying new ways of preparing foods, getting out and exercising together, do it together.
- If you or anyone else in the family wants to learn how to be healthier, join TOPS also. There is no greater way to show support than to join yourself.

Thank you for your support!