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editorial

Battle of the bulge

Our friends in Arkansas are seeing a lot less of their governor these days - about a hundred pounds less.

Gov. Mike Huckabee is a role model for all of us who ought to be slimming down. He managed it with the classic formula of a carefully monitored balanced diet and regular exercise.

Huckabee told The Associated Press that he tried some of the fads that are all the rage these days, including popular low-carbohydrate and low-fat diets. But while he could lose a few pounds on such diets, he couldn't keep them off.

The governor had a lot of company in his frustration. One study of diets reported that only 10 percent of the participants reached their desired weight and maintained it for one year. Only 5 percent maintained their desired weight for two years.

The problem with most diets, nutritionists warn, is the very attitude that accompanies them - the notion that they are an extreme but temporary regimen that will be maintained for a while before the dieter reverts to his or her old habits.

Huckabee's luck changed when he joined a 15-week Weight Control Program at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences last June. Aimed at chronic adult obesity, the three- stage program starts with a largely liquid diet of 1,000 calories or less a day. As patients approach their goal weight, they are reintroduced to solid food and plan an ongoing diet in connection with a doctor and dietician. The program includes classes and therapy.

Huckabee says he was motivated by concerns about his health - he joined the program after being diagnosed with diabetes, a malady that is disproportionately likely to strike the obese. Other health issues, including heart and circulatory problems, are also correlated with obesity.

"I don't want the weight issue to become the focus. I want the focus on health and fitness," Huckabee told the

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