

# WEIGHT

# TO GO!

Global BC's **Steve Darling** gives us the skinny on his stunning weight loss

Let's get one thing out of the way right now: **Steve Darling** is not ill.

Concerned viewers, alarmed at the *Morning News* anchor's dramatic weight loss

in recent months, have been writing him to inquire: "Is everything OK? Are you sick?" Even his own mother, apparently "staggered" at the change in her only son, voiced similar worries.

Darling is happy to report that he's just fine. Great, even.

And, no: his doctor didn't order him to lose

**MORNING NEWS**

Weekdays, 6 a.m., Global

weight; his wife didn't read him the riot act; and he wasn't having a midlife crisis. In fact, it was a combination of factors that inspired Darling to embark on his 65-lb. weight loss.

"I've battled weight my whole life," the six-foot-four broadcaster admits. "When you're as tall as I am, that's just the way it is. I lead a very busy life, with my job, two kids and a wife; and last year I did 63 charity events, so it's hard to find time within that to care for yourself. I kind of got lost."

But that all changed in January, when Darling decided to get serious about improving his health

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STORY BY ANNA DUPAS | PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT KARPA



habits. It was a commitment entrenched, unfortunately, in personal tragedy. “We have a friend whose husband was killed in a workplace accident and that kind of thing causes you to reevaluate your own life,” he says. “I just felt like it was the right time to do this.”

And as much as people have expressed concern about his weight loss, even more of them have been exclaiming: “OMG! What did you do? And how did you do it!”

Three words: **Dr. Allana Polo.** A naturopathic physician and owner of Polo Health + Longevity Centre in New Westminster, she guided Darling on a customized Pound-a-Day diet that, for the first five weeks, required him to consume only 850 calories per day. To say that’s restrictive is an understatement, considering the recommended daily requirement for adult men is between 2,350 to 2,900 calories.

For many a guy, 850 calories is little more than lunch on the go — roughly the equivalent of a McDonald’s quarter-pounder with large fries or two slices of Pizza Hut’s meat lover’s special. Scarier still, it’s also about 300 calories less than a large bag of unbuttered movie-theatre popcorn.

No wonder Darling admits: “I had a lot of fears going into it. I thought there’s no way I’m going to be able to do this.”



But not only did he do it, he ended up doing it twice. And, surprisingly, he didn’t even feel all that deprived. “You can actually squeeze a lot of food into 850 calories,” he swears. “It’s easier than you think.”

It also helped that his wife Jen joined him on the journey and, in the process,

ended up losing 35 lbs. herself. Says Darling: “I’m a competitive person, so the fact that my wife and I were doing it together turned it into a fun game.”

He didn’t even balk at the two-phase program’s other requirements either, such as the weekly B12 injections or the daily dose of HCG, which he took each



morning in the form of a dissolvable lozenge. Human Chorionic Gonadotropin, also known as the pregnancy hormone, fires up the metabolism to accelerate fat burning. It also helps to quell hunger.

“To be honest, I don’t really understand the science behind it,” Darling says. “My mind kind of glazes

over when it comes to that sort of thing. I know there’s some controversy around the program, and I don’t know if it’d work for everyone — I want to be clear on that — but I do know that it works for me.”

If the proof is in the proverbial pudding, Darling, a longtime recreational athlete whose off-camera hours are often spent on the golf course or soccer field, has good news on that front: “I’ve always been a high-energy person, but now I have even more energy. I can get to the 16th, 17th or 18th hole now and not feel tired.”

## DR. POLO’S POUND-A-DAY DIET

### PHASE 1 — LOW-CALORIE DIET — 40 DAYS

- » You start an 850-calorie diet made up of a restrictive list of proteins, vegetables, fruits and carbs. Whole foods are eaten, nothing packaged at all, and portions are weighed and measured.
- » HCG (the pregnancy hormone) is administered each morning either in injection or lozenge form to help suppress appetite and to help mobilize fat stores, as if your body is “eating” its own fat. With the use of this hormone, all muscle mass is preserved, which is what makes this program so enticing. HCG requires a doctor’s prescription, so you are not able to buy this hormone over the counter and administer it unsupervised.
- » You come into the office for weekly visits where you’re weighed and given a vitamin B12 injection for energy levels. These ongoing visits ensure that you’re closely monitored while on your low-calorie diet.

### PHASE 2 — MAINTENANCE — 3 WEEKS

- » You follow a low-carb, high-protein diet to ease back into a regular eating routine. Fats can be included in this phase along with other fruits, vegetables, proteins and dairy. Maintenance allows the body to adjust to its weight loss, and to establish a new set point. Once maintenance is complete, you are slowly transitioned into a healthy lifestyle routine that includes a healthy diet and exercise plan.

— DR. ALLANA POLO



**“I thought I knew quite a bit about nutrition before, but Dr. Polo has taught me so much.** I think about food in a different way now. For example, I used to add vegetables to a meal, but now I’ll do the reverse and make a meal out of vegetables — the greener the better! — and add some protein to it. I also used to be a bread-aholic but now I’m obsessed with kale.”

His improved health is reflected in his latest medical check-ups too. “My doctor is happy. My blood pressure used to be a little high but now everything is within the perfect range,” he reports proudly.

Still, one of the biggest thrills for the anchor was this: “I’ve had to go out and buy a bunch of new clothes because everything’s too big for me now. It’s a good problem to have! I was looking at suits the other day and the salesman told me I need to try on the slimfit size. I said, ‘I’ve never been a slimfit in my life!’ And the clerk said, ‘Well, you are now!’”

And if we are what we eat, it’s no surprise Darling is feeling so great. “I thought I knew quite a bit about nutrition before, but Dr. Polo has taught me so much,” he says. “I think about food in a different way now. For example, I used to add vegetables to a meal, but now I’ll

## STEVE DARLING’S PROTEIN POWER BARS

- » 5 scoops of protein powder, such as a natural whey-based peanut butter flavour
- » Almond milk
- » Nuts and/or dried fruit, to taste

Place protein powder into a bowl. Add enough almond milk and water to form a paste. Toss in your choice of almonds, pecans, pumpkin seeds or dried fruit like cranberries or cherries, if desired. Mix it all up, spoon into a clear baking dish and freeze until firm. Enjoy!

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And these days, when Global staffers head into meetings, Darling is no longer tempted to make a pit stop at the

vending machine for a bag of potato chips, one of his former weaknesses. Instead, he’ll snack on an apple or a piece of his homemade protein bars. (See sidebar for recipe). That’s not to say he doesn’t have the occasional indulgence — “I had a few nachos at a barbecue the other day” — or his daily morning coffee — “because I have to get up so early!” — but instead of sugar, he now sweetens it with vanilla stevia. “It’s great!” he enthuses.

So with his newsworthy new physique, does the broadcaster have any plans to moonlight as a weight-loss spokesman? After all, we remind him, Subway once made a star out of a plump college kid who lost mega pounds eating footlongs each day. “No!” Darling chuckles heartily. “I wish! But we can’t do that in news, so there won’t be any celebrity endorsements in my future.” ■

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