

Achieving a Healthy Weight

Obesity is a growing epidemic in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control recently released statistics indicating obesity rates of 26.7% in 2009. Obesity is increasing the risk of heart attacks, strokes, high blood pressure, diabetes, osteoarthritis and certain types of cancer including endometrial, colon, kidney, esophageal and postmenopausal breast cancers

This slippage to a heavier, unhealthy society is attributed to many factors including the marketing of high calorie, low nutritional value foods and beverages, oversizing portions, and less physical activity at work and home. Food excessively high in calories is readily available and we are a car, tv, and computer dependent society that lacks sidewalks and walking communities. Sleep deprivation contributes to becoming overweight through increases a hormone responsible for increasing appetite, while adequate sleep increases leptin which suppresses appetite.

How to obtain a healthy weight? Drop your daily food intake.

- 1) use a smaller plate –your eyes will see a satisfying plateful and you will smaller portions –“ portion control “ is your key word
- 2) don't take seconds
- 3) when eating out “take half home” – enter the restaurant with the idea that you are not going to eat the oversized portions served but are going to stretch your dollars by getting two meals out of one. Also “just ask” for healthier options like the salad dressing on the side instead of heavily glopped on and for food baked, poached or grilled instead of fried.
- 4) Better that excessive food be put to “waste instead of your waist”; remember a thick waist reflects your health and when its bigger your health is poorer.
- 5) Don't drink your calories: sugared drinks add calories and don't suppress appetite.
- 6) Be a label reader – those nutrition labels on food and beverages are there to tell you if there are excessively high calories. Look for calorie numbers in large chain eateries – they are required to have them available now – use them.
- 7) Shoot for ½ to 2 pounds per week. You are more likely to keep it off if you do so.

Oh, and try to Incorporate exercise into your day: take the stairs instead of the elevator, take a five minute exercise break a few times a day, walk or ride a bike to work, or exercise over your lunch break. Its good for your health.

But more than anything do food “portion control”; you can’t exercise your way out of being overweight. You simply can’t exercise enough if you are eating more than you should.

Good Luck! And remember, your physician is a valuable resource for helping guide you to lose weight.

Notes:

9 states had obesity rates >30% in 2009 compared to none in 2000

Most obese states are in the South and Midwest

Most overweight populations are non Hispanic blacks, Hispanics , those who did not graduate from high school, ages 50-69

Data bases upon the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System which is a state- based, random digit dialed land line telephone survey of US civilian, non-institutionalized adults. Thus the numbers are likely to falsely low since most people tend to overestimate height and underestimate weight.

Exercise affects hormones ghrelin, insulin and leptin