

Obesity & Nutrition

The problem of being overweight has escalated to great proportions over the last several decades in the United States. As we all know, obesity can lead to a number of health issues, including heart disease, diabetes and others. Recent studies have shown that obesity has just beat out smoking as the leading cause of death in our country. That is something to make us think.

Being overweight or obese is defined as having excess body fat, a weight that is greater than what is considered healthy for your given height. In terms of numbers, being obese is having a Body Mass Index (BMI) of greater than 30; morbid obesity is having a BMI greater than 40. The formula for calculating your BMI follows: weight in pounds x 703 divided by height in inches squared. There are, of course, numerous websites that will calculate your BMI with a few mouse clicks.

Now let's examine the factors that can contribute to weight problems. Most frequently, being overweight or obese results from a caloric intake that is greater than the caloric activity expenditure. Basically eating too much and not getting enough exercise. Sounds simple, right? Our body weight has several influences: genes, metabolism, muscle mass, behavior, support system, culture activity and socioeconomic status. The greatest areas of obesity prevention are within your behavior and your environment. In other words, you are in control of your weight. This is important to recognize. Nine times out of ten, people are overweight because they choose to be. A healthy support system that encourages healthy eating and physical activity will help prevent or cure obesity. Keep this in mind: surrounding yourself with health-minded people will aid you on your quest to become thinner and more health-conscious.

Peruse the facts, if you will. Obesity is an epidemic in this country. It is directly related to the increase of chronic diseases, such as heart disease, hypertension, and cancer. Over 60 million US adults are obese; it accounts for 2/3 of diabetes and heart disease victims and contributes to 15% of cancer in women and 20% in men. Obesity can also cause disabilities, pain and suffering, and may negatively affect mobility and other quality-of-life measures.

So what do we do about this issue? How can it get better?

The number one way to help yourself through weight problems is to practice physical activity and healthy food choices in an environment that will support these positive behaviors. Yes, that's right — eating well and exercising is pretty much guaranteed to help your weight woes.

When attempting to eat a healthier, more natural diet, be sure to avoid processed foods with chemical preservatives that promote unhealthy blood sugar levels and fat build up in the arteries. Processed food is anything that comes in a packaging of any sort. Toss out those Twinkies! Try to focus on eating a plant-based diet, incorporating lean protein sources such as fish or chicken breast and whole grains, such as oatmeal, brown rice and high fiber/low sugar cereals.

Eating out less and cooking from home = success!

The CDC Obesity Prevention Department has found one of the leading causes of obesity in our country is the fact that more people are joining the corporate work force, which leads to an increase in meals being consumed away from home. The oversized portions, hidden calories, fat, sodium and sugar in restaurant food are putting weight on us. How do you solve this dilemma? Brown-bag! Bringing your own lunch allows you to control what precisely you're consuming. If you must go out, order healthier options, such as soups and salads (dressing on the side!).

By making changes in your daily diet and activity schedule, you are sure to decrease your weight and improve your overall health.

You can find even more statistics at www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/index.html.

Supplementation

Obesity has become an epidemic. In order to treat obesity, a caloric deficiency is required. Over time, a low calorie diet can lead to nutrition deficiencies. This is where supplementation can help one lose weight without putting their health at risk. Supplements also increase weight loss progress more than diet and exercise alone. Listed below are supplements recommended for those who are trying to lose weight and fight diseases related to obesity. Make sure they are manufactured by a company with NPA's certification for good manufacturing practices. Additional supplements may be recommended by your doctor.

Krill or Fish oil - essential source of omega 3 fatty acids

Gender Specific Multivitamin - to ensure all vitamin and mineral requirements are met daily.

Ubiquinol or CoQ10 - pure form of antioxidants, boost immune system and manage chronic disease

Probiotics - digestive and immune health

Super Greens and/or Resveratrol - pure form of antioxidants

Branch chain amino acids (for those who work out regularly) - increase muscle recovery after workouts

Calcium/Magnesium/potassium - for bone health

Ginseng and green tea - natural energy and metabolic booster