



HEALTH

LOSING WEIGHT

Nobody wants to be obese. As many people know, however, it is difficult to maintain ideal weight and especially difficult to maintain weight loss.

Obesity is defined as an excess of body fat. As fat cells enlarge, excess fat accumulates. In those who are extremely obese, the number of fat cells in the body also increases. Both genetic and environmental factors play important roles in the development of obesity. Some of these factors include excessive caloric intake, inactivity and metabolic or endocrine disorders.

WHAT IT DOES TO YOU

Statistically, people who are overweight have a higher risk of heart attack than thin ones, and their heart attacks are more likely to be severe. Compared with thin people, they tend to have higher blood pressure, higher blood cholesterol, and an increased risk of diabetes, which itself greatly increases the risk of heart disease as well as blindness, kidney failure, and amputations. Overweight people also run an increased risk of cancer of the breast or colon.

ARE YOU OVERWEIGHT?

Most American adults are overweight. Women often admit they are too heavy. Men are more likely to think their increased weight is normal even though they are 20 to 30 pounds heavier, on average, than men of their age and height in other countries. You are overweight if you are more than 10 pounds heavier than you were slim, healthy 20 year old, or if the roll of fat on you side, at the waist line, is thicker than 1 inch.

Although it is best to know the distribution of your body weight as fat and muscle, this can only be determined by sophisticated techniques such as underwater weighing or measurement of skinfold thickness with special calipers. When this is not possible or is inconvenient, there is another general rule for estimating desirable weight:

*Women are allowed 100 pounds for the first 5 feet of height, with 5 pounds added for each inch over 5 feet. Therefore, a 5 ft. 5 inch tall woman should weigh 125 pounds.

*Men are allowed 110 pounds for the first 5 feet of height, with 6 pounds added for each inch over 5 feet. Therefore, a 5 ft. 5 in. tall man should weigh 140 pounds.

Different body weight allowances are given for different body skeletal sizes or frames. Desirable body weight for a person with a small frame is about 10 percent less than for one with a medium frame. Likewise, the desirable weight for a large frame is about 10 percent greater than that for a medium frame.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

First, throw away all diets or diet books which advocate a "one-sided" diet, such as a high-protein diet, or one that severely restricts calories. They may be bad for you, they don't supply all the nutrition you need, and they are almost impossible to stick with. (If they worked, why would a new "miracle diet" turn up every few months?) Then:

- 1) Eat three meals a day, including breakfast.
- 2) Avoid foods high in sugar or fat, but do include starches such as whole wheat bread, potatoes, rice, etc.
- 3) Limit portion size of meat; even lean meat is high in calories.
- 4) Use nonfat and lowfat dairy products.
- 5) Eat slowly, making each meal last 30 minutes without second helpings.
- 6) Decide on one mid-morning and one mid-afternoon snack if you become hungry between meals.
- 7) Plan low-calorie snacks ahead of time. Fruits and vegetables are ideal. Eat slowly, spending at least 10 minutes on each snack.
- 8) Expect weigh loss to be slow but steady. Better to lose 10 pounds a year and keep it off than to lose 10 pounds one month and regain it the next.
- 9) Keep a "Food and Exercise Diary". Write down the time and everything you ate and everything you did at that time. This will give you a pretty good idea of what is causing your weight problem: where too many calories are coming in, and where too few are being used in exercise.

Second, become more active. This does not mean you should rush out and jog (which could be dangerous if you are very much overweight). If you take up a regular exercise program, start slowly. You have extra work carrying poundage; exercise will be easier when you weigh less.

You may have heard that you need to run 3 1/2 miles or jump rope for 1 hour to burn off the calories in one slice of chocolate cake. Seems hardly worth bothering with exercise. But, if you look at the long-range results, the picture is different. In the course of a year, if you use up more calories than you consume, you won't be able to help losing weight. A miles' walk a day should take off at least 10 pounds in a year, if your caloric intake remains the same. In fact, your extra walking may take off even more than that; brisk exercise can tone up your metabolism, so that you burn up more calories even when you are resting. Weigh loss through exercise is mostly fat, whereas dieting alone deprives your body of some valuable lean muscle tissue. As you lose fat through exercise, you will start to look slimmer even before much weigh loss shows up on the scales, because some of your flab will turn back into lean muscle tissue, which weighs more than flab. So use a tape measure and the mirror to judge progress, not just the bathroom scale.

You should arrange for at least 20 minutes of EXTRA activity every day; if possible, half an hour, or even a whole hour. Set yourself a goal: a total of 20 to 40 minutes of exercise a day:

12 SUGGESTIONS FOR EXTRA ACTIVITY

- 1) Take stairs instead of elevator.
- 2) Walk between stores.
- 3) Walk to work.
- 4) Park at the far end of the parking lot.
- 5) Get off the bus one stop too soon.
- 6) Do extra housework (mopping, vacuuming).
- 7) Mow the lawn.
- 8) Garden (extra sweeping, hoeing, digging).
- 9) Bicycle to stores, or to work or school.
- 10) Walk down the hall to talk to a colleague instead of using the office phone.
- 11) Walk to eating place at lunch.
- 12) Take up a regular exercise program such as: walking - dancing - running - bicycling - exercise classes - stationary bicycle riding.

CHUBBY CHILDREN

Far too many American children are overweight, and grow into obese adults with all of the health risks obesity causes. Being overweight may run in families -- but mainly it is because some families exercise too little and eat more than they need. Help your children grow up slim by getting them to:

- *Be more active (less TV time).
- *Snack at REGULAR times, not all the time.
- *Cut down on junk foods that are high in sugar and fat.

Children who grow up with good eating and exercise habits grow up to be strong, healthy adults.

Next on our Staying Healthy series, we will talk about exercise and its overall importance in keeping ourselves healthy. Be sure to join us on Thursday, April 14 at 1:30 p.m. here at the Grand Ronde Tribal Headquarters for a lively presentation on EXERCISE: WHAT'S GOOD, WHAT'S BAD and what it can mean to you as you strive to STAY HEALTHY!!

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Tribal Health Program

