

Getting Fit to Serve

From the desk of
Shirnett Matthews, MD



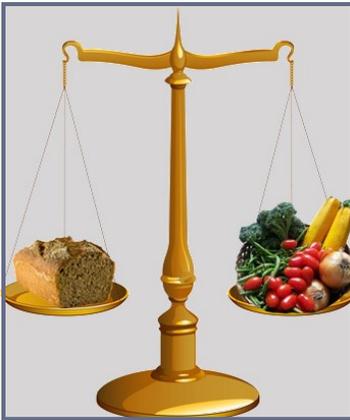
March/April 2015
Volume 1, Issue 2

OBESITY IN AMERICA: IT'S GETTING WORSE

Nearly, 2/3 or 66% of adult Americans are overweight or obese. This is overwhelming and disappointing because the prevalence of obesity in the United States has more than doubled over the past four decades despite much attention by health professions, the media and mass educational campaigns—focusing on the benefits of healthier living (diets and exercise) and the devastation of excess weight on health and the body. The medical community is now at a loss—we do not know what to do to motivate our patients and the public in general to face this crisis and take charge of their lives and make the choice to LIVE!

There is no right answer—the cold, hard fact is that it is up to each of us to decide that it's time to make a change and do it. What I know, is what you already know—successful weight loss results from a combination of motivation, physical activity, and caloric restriction. Maintaining weight loss requires a lifelong commitment to balancing caloric intake and energy expenditure.

**Simply put—EXCESS CALORIES LEADS TO WEIGHT GAIN.
YOU MOVE IT AND YOU WILL LOSE IT!
BUT, what and how much you EAT matters! Use a smaller plate.
Half your plate should be veggies.**



But, the type of calorie does matter. Basically, energy intake is not independent of energy expenditure, and the type of calories you eat does affect your energy output. The food we eat elicits hormonal responses that determine how energy is stored in the body (i.e., in the form of body fat). Sugar, high-fructose corn syrup and high glycemic carbohydrates (pasta, bread, potatoes, etc.) drive an enormous *insulin* response. *Insulin is a "storage" hormone, causing the body to stop using fat as energy, and store it instead.* Fat is not the main culprit at all. On the flip side, low glycemic carbohydrates (veggies and some fruits) produce higher

levels of *glucagon*. *Glucagon promotes the use of fat for energy.* In summary, the storage or release of fat from our adipose tissue (fat cells) is hormonally driven and is directly related to what types of food we eat. **EXCESS FAT IS STORED ENERGY.**

So, what is the most effective diet for fat loss? A diet, where the bulk of carbohydrate consumption comes from vegetables and some fruits, promotes amazing fat loss. This means nixing or limiting the breads, pasta, potatoes and even whole grains from your diet. There is nothing in these foods that you cannot get tenfold from replacing them with a variety of vegetables (remember, it worked for the 3 Hebrew boys—the now popular Daniel Diet). **Moderation is the key.**

PUTTING THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE

- Worldwide obesity has more than doubled since 1980.
 - In 2014, more than 1.9 billion adults, 18 years and older, were overweight. Of these over 600 million were obese.
 - 39% of adults aged 18 years and over were overweight in 2014, and 13% were obese.
 - Most of the world's population live in countries where overweight and obesity kills more people than underweight.
 - 42 million children under the age of 5 were overweight or obese in 2013.
- ⇒ **OBESITY IS PREVENTABLE!**

Obesity is a term that means you weigh at least 20% more than what is considered normal weight for your height.

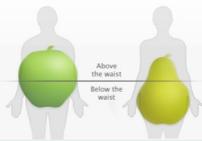
Obesity (excess body fat) makes you more likely to have many bad, **preventable** health conditions

- Heart disease and stroke
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Some cancers (colon, breast, endometrium (uterus cancer), kidney, esophagus, gallbladder, ovaries, and pancreas).
- Gallbladder disease and gallstones
- Osteoarthritis—disease that destroys the joints
- Gout
- Breathing problems, such as sleep apnea (when a person stops breathing for short periods during sleep) and asthma
- Infertility problems
- High total cholesterol or high levels of triglycerides
- Acid reflux (indigestion) - which **can** lead to cancer

Not everyone who is obese has all of these problems; but being obese increases your risk of developing these issues. The risk rises if you have a family history of one of these conditions.



Apple shape vs pear shape



WHERE YOU STORE EXCESS FAT MATTERS

Body fat that accumulates around the stomach areas poses a greater health risk than fat stored in the lower body.

Men are more prone to pot bellies “apple shape” and women are more prone to fat collecting around hips, buttocks, and thighs—more “pear shaped”.

People with apple shapes are more likely to develop diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and certain types of cancers than those who are pear shaped. Why? Because your organs live in the mid-section of your body and therefore fat would surround those organs.

This is somewhat of an inherited tendency; women tend to store fat in their lower bodies for use as energy during pregnancy and breast-feeding. But don't be fooled, this changes after menopause. So, prevention is important.

WHAT IS BMI?

- BMI stands for “Body Mass Index,” a ratio between weight and height.
- BMI is a standard “tool” for helping you judge your body weight and the amount of body fat you have.
- For older adults, the BMI normal range is 18-25.
- The higher the BMI number above the normal range, the greater the degree of overweight.
- People with a higher percentage of body fat tend to have a higher BMI, except for body builders.
- *BMI for children and teens are calculated the same way but are placed on a growth chart to find out what it actually means. BMI is used in reference to percentile on the chart. Greater than 95th percentile is overweight.*
- Carrying excess body fat, not muscle, puts you at greater risk for health problems.

WHAT SHOULD MY BMI BE?

For adults:

- Normal BMI 18.5-24.9
- Underweight BMI <18.5
- Overweight BMI 25-29.9
- Obesity BMI 30-39.9
- Extreme obesity BMI ≥40

HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY BMI?

- Decrease your weight
- Start slowly with achievable goals; usually 10% of your current weight
- Losing about 1 to 2 pounds per week is healthy
- Make lifestyle changes; balance the foods you eat with daily physical activity.
- There is no magic pill or diet—eat less fats and sugars and move more.

LET'S GET MOVING



What causes obesity and overweight?

I believe many people (health professionals and scientists alike) make this explanation too difficult or put too many variables in the equation. Yes, there will always be outliers to every situation, but I like to keep things simple.

WE EAT TOO MUCH AND WE DON'T MOVE ENOUGH.

⇒ The fundamental cause of obesity and overweight is an energy imbalance between calories consumed (*eating*) and calories expended (*moving*).

⇒ This is also seen worldwide. *Globally, there has been: an increased intake of energy-dense foods that are high in fat; and an increased*

increase in physical inactivity due to the increasingly sedentary nature of many forms of work, changing modes of transportation, and increasing urbanization (World Health Organization, 2015)

How can overweight and obesity be reduced?

Hear this! Being overweight and/or obese (and therefore the diseases that they cause) are preventable. WHY? Because you have a choice about what you put in your body. If you decide to be healthy and make healthier choices you affect your household therefore having a positive change on generations to come. Promoting a POSITIVE CHAIN REACTION.

It starts with you! Make a change today (right now) - take up the challenge to LIVE and live a healthier life and be a better YOU!

Decide to:

- ⇒ limit energy intake from total fats and sugars;
- ⇒ increase consumption of fruit and vegetables, as well as legumes, whole grains and nuts;
- ⇒ engage in regular physical activity (60 minutes a day for children and 150 minutes per week for adults).
- ⇒ Make a goal to burn at least 250 calories each day.

Remember this, you are an ambassador for Christ, you are strategically placed by God in your family, in your neighborhood, on your job to be an example and to be a witness for God. No one else can do what God has called you do. For you be continually effective in your personal mission field you MUST be healthy. God has personally equip you with the necessary tools to be “the key” right where you are. To carry out God's purpose for your life, in this season—you must be healthy. The choice is yours! Paul says it like this in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. “You've all been to the stadium and seen the athletes race. Everyone runs; one wins. Run to win. All good athletes train hard. They do it for a gold medal that tarnishes and fades. You're after one that's gold eternally. I don't know about you, but I'm running hard for the finish line. I'm giving it everything I've got. No sloppy living for me! I'm staying alert and in top condition. I'm not going to get caught napping, telling everyone else all about it and then missing out myself” The Message



Shirnett Matthews, MD

