

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

- Staff will learn the health risks associated with being overweight
- Staff will understand the importance of weight management

Since the 70's, the prevalence of overweight and obesity has increased sharply for both adults and children in the United States. Most Americans have a poor diet and are overweight and/or obese:

- 83% don't have a good diet
- 65% are overweight
- 34% are obese
- 67% don't get enough exercise

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH RISKS OF BEING OVERWEIGHT?

Weighing too much may increase your risk for developing many health problems. If you are overweight or obese, you may increase your risk of many diseases and health conditions, including the following:

- **Coronary heart disease and Stroke:** This is when the blood flow and heart are not functioning normally. Often, the arteries have become hardened and narrowed. If you have coronary heart disease, you may suffer from a heart attack, congestive heart failure, sudden cardiac death, angina (chest pain), or abnormal heart rhythm. Coronary heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and Stroke is the third leading cause.
- **Type 2 Diabetes:** A disease in which blood sugar levels are above normal. High blood sugar is a major cause of coronary heart disease, kidney disease, stroke, amputation, and blindness. Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in the U.S.
- **Sleep Apnea:** A condition in which a person stops breathing for short periods during the night. A person who has sleep apnea may suffer from daytime sleepiness, difficulty concentrating, and heart failure.
- **Some Cancers (endometrial, breast, and colon):** Cancer occurs when cells in one part of the body grow abnormally or out of control. Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the U.S.
- **Pregnancy complications:** Overweight and obesity raise the risk of pregnancy complications for both mother and baby. Pregnant women who are overweight

may have an increased risk for gestational diabetes, pre-eclampsia, and cesarean delivery.

HOW CAN I LOWER MY HEALTH RISKS?

You should lower your health risks by losing weight, doing regular physical activity and eating healthy. If you are overweight, losing as little as 5% of your body weight may lower your risk for several diseases. If you weight 200 pounds, this means losing 10 pounds.

Weight loss occurs when an individual is in a state of negative energy balance. When the human body is spending more energy in work and heat than it is gaining from food or other nutritional supplements, it will use stored reserves of fat or muscle.

Eating too much or not being physically active will make you overweight. To maintain your weight, the calories you eat must equal the energy you burn. To lose weight, you must use more calories than you eat. A weight-control strategy might include

- Choosing low-fat, low-calorie foods
- Eating smaller portions
- Drinking water instead of sugary drinks
- Being physically active

To lose weight, you have to cut down on the number of calories you consume and start burning more calories each day. Calories are the amount of energy in the food you eat. Some foods have more calories than others. For example, foods high in fat and sugar are typically high in calories. If you eat more calories than your body uses, the extra calories will be stored as excess body fat.

A pound of fat is about 3,500 calories. To lose 1 pound of fat in a week, you have to eat 3,500 fewer calories or “burn off” an extra 3,500 calories in that week. You can burn off calories by exercising or just by being more active.

The best way to lose weight and keep it off is to eat fewer calories and burn off calories. If you cut 250 calories from your diet each day and exercise enough to burn off 250 calories, that adds up to 500 fewer calories in one day. If you do this for 7 days, you can lose 1 pound of fat in a week.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU EAT?

Most people can eat 3 regular meals and 1 snack every day. The 3 meals should be about the same size and should be low in fat. Others benefit more if they eat 5 to 6 smaller meals throughout the day, about 2 to 3 hours apart.

Whichever choice you make do not skip meals. Skipping meals may help you lose weight in the beginning but fails in the long run. Skipping meals may make you feel too hungry later in the day, causing you to overeat later.

CLOSING

- *Encourage discussion about the health risks associated with being overweight and the changes they can make in their life to get or remain healthy.*