

Overweight and Obesity: What You Can Do

Being Physically Active Can Help You Attain or Maintain a Healthy Weight

OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY

- 61% of adults in the United States were overweight or obese in 1999.
- Approximately 300,000 deaths each year in the United States may be attributable to obesity.
- Overweight and obesity are associated with heart disease, certain types of cancer, type 2 diabetes, stroke, arthritis, breathing problems, and psychological disorders, such as depression.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: WEIGHT CONTROL AND OTHER BENEFITS

- Physical activity contributes to weight loss, especially when it is combined with calorie reduction.
- Regular physical activity is extremely helpful for the prevention of overweight and obesity.
- Regular physical activity is very important in maintaining weight loss.
- In addition to weight control, physical activity helps prevent heart disease, helps control cholesterol levels and diabetes, slows bone loss associated with advancing age, lowers the risk of certain cancers, and helps reduce anxiety and depression.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN THE UNITED STATES

- Many people live sedentary lives; in fact, 40% of adults in the United States do not participate in any leisure-time physical activity.
- Less than 1/3 of adults engage in the recommended amounts of physical activity (at least 30 minutes most days).

YOU CAN ACTIVATE YOURSELF

- You don't need special skills or training to be physically active. Walking is a great way to be active.
- Physical activity should be initiated slowly, and the intensity should be increased gradually (e.g., start with a 10-minute walk three times a week and work your way up to 30 minutes of brisk walking or other form of moderate activity five times a week).
- Activities can be split into several short periods (e.g., 10 minutes 3 times a day) instead of one longer period (e.g., 30 minutes once a day).
- You should select activities that you **ENJOY** and can fit into your daily life.
- It may take time to incorporate more activity into your daily life. Don't get discouraged if at first you miss a day or two; just keep trying and do your best to make it a regular part of your life. You will soon realize how good it feels to be physically active and fit.
- Ask for support from friends and family; likewise, support the people in your life who are trying to be physically active.
- Many forms of physical activity can be social, allowing you to converse and spend time with family or friends or to develop new relationships.
- Make fitness a priority...**COMMIT TO IT.**

* Consult with your health care provider before starting a vigorous exercise program if you have ever had heart trouble or high blood pressure or suffer from chest pains, dizziness or fainting, arthritis, or if you are over age 40 (men) or 50 (women).

THE ENERGY BALANCE

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