

Hope & Healing

Obesity How To Approach The Overweight State

A heart at peace gives life to the body — Proverbs 14:30

Introduction

For most Americans the words “overweight” and “obese” trigger anxiety and frustration. What we weight and how we look in our clothes are essential parts of our personal image and when the pounds add up, we become distressed.

There’s so much food in our country, that we think about eating most of the time. Food advertisements, fast food restaurants, convenience stores, and vending machines are everywhere. Ironically, at the same time, we constantly worry about our weight. The result of recent studies suggests that it is reasonable to encourage the loss of small amounts of weight over long periods of time.

How Much Should You Weight

Researchers believe that if you are 20% over your ideal body weight your health can be seriously in danger. The trouble is, no one is sure how to best measure your ideal weight. Charts like the Metropolitan Life Insurance Weight Tables don’t take into account family history, age, or race.

A better measurement is that of body fat, but this is not easy to do. Now, doctors are encouraged to use the body-mass index, which is also flawed.

The Body-Mass Index

The main medical measure of a person’s weight is their Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI is a measure of “body fatness” that looks at a

person’s weight in relation to their height. For example, a person 5 feet tall who weighs 200 pounds will have more body fat than a person 6 feet tall who weighs the same weight; therefore, the 5 foot person will have a greater BMI indicating more body fat.

Look at the BMI chart included. If you are 5 ft 10 inches tall and weight 167 pounds your BMI is 24, but, if you weigh 209 pounds at the same height your BMI increases to 30.

How does your BMI measure up:
< 25 - a healthy weight
Between 25-29 is Overweight
30 or greater is Obese
40 or greater is Extreme Obesity.

Body Shape

Where your body stores its excess fat makes a lot of difference when it comes to your risk of developing heart disease. The body of some men is said to be “apple shaped” because of the fat stored around their belt line.

Women typically store fat lower on the body and become “pear shaped.”

You can determine the risk of developing heart trouble by measurement of the waist-to-hip ratio. Follow these steps:

1. Measure your waist at the navel with a tape measure.
2. Measure around your hips and buttocks at the largest part.
3. Divide your waist measurement by your hip size. This is your waist to hip ratio. Men should

be less than 1.0, women less than 0.8.

If your ratio is higher than normal you have a greater than normal chance of developing heart trouble and should move to get the fat off.

What Can Hurt You When You Try to Lose Weight

Drugs. Pills have no place in a weight-loss plan.

Fad Diets. Bouncing from one diet to another like a yo-yo makes losing weight more difficult next time.

What Works

- **Self-help Groups** when combined with a balanced diet and an exercise program can be a big help.
- **Changes in behavior.** Treat overeating like an addiction. Develop a serious, sensible plan of getting weight off and keeping it off. If you slip, figure out what went wrong. Begin again. Anticipate temptations. 75% of your slipping into old habits will come during the following danger periods:
 - When you are bored, tense, angry, or frustrated.
 - When you’ve had an argument at home or at work.
 - While attending a party,

business lunch, a reunion, a church social, any event where large amounts of food are served.

- **Why an Exercise Program works.** Our bodies are programmed to resist weight loss. One theory is the “set-point” theory. Studies show that the brain has a kind of thermostat setting to keep your weight where it is. We inherit this tendency to keep a certain set point and overriding it is possible, but not easy. It can be done in two ways: first, through exercise, and second by reducing the caloric and sugar content in our diets.

A Reasonable Approach _____

No one has all the answers. Study these steps until they become your plan. Do your own thinking about the best way to get it done for you personally. We all have different ways of life, different circumstances, different schedules. Make these steps fit your lifestyle. You will need:

- A changed and sensible way of eating.
- A change in behavior.
- Help from others.
- An exercise program.
- You will need to consider how your plan will affect your family, job, leisure activities.
- You will need to make your future health a major priority.

Steps To Success _____

- In a small notebook, keep a food diary for one week. Write down what you ate, when, how many calories it contained and how you were feeling. Focus on getting rid of the parts of your diet that are killing you.

- Work with your doctor. Ask your doctor to help you develop an exercise plan. Agree upon a target weight with your doctor.
- Get your kitchen ready. Get rid of packaged food and all desserts except fruits.
- Always eat breakfast.
- Join a self-help group, or form one of your own.
- Put it on your calendar to weigh in at your doctor’s office once a month.
- Become familiar with your exercise program. Buy exercise clothes. Lay them out the evening before you plan to exercise. Go to your appointed exercise place every time you’re scheduled, whether you feel like it or not.

Summary _____

Start simply. Congratulate yourself with each step accomplished. Decide for yourself that this is the most important step in your life. Don’t let anyone’s negative words create doubts that you can do it. Be gentle with yourself when you slip. Put exercise, and a no fat way of eating above everything else so that down the road when you have reached your goal, there’ll be a lot more life to enjoy.