Male Obesity: Not a Weighting Game

It's no secret that overweight and obesity are big problems in the United States. Obesity affects men and women about equally. If you are obese, you are at a higher risk of developing many adverse health conditions: gallbladder disease, gallstones, liver disease, Type 2 diabetes, gout, osteoarthritis, certain types of cancer, heart disease and stroke, sleep apnea, high blood pressure. And guys... that's just the tip of the iceberg!

Does this tux make me look fat?
Forget the cosmetic factor; obesity is disastrous to health. Men rarely worry about their weight, so without paying heed to daily intake or long-term consequences. Even if they are overweight and they know it is bad for them, men will rarely take steps to overcome obesity until they get a wake-up call in the form of a heart attack or a diagnosis of diabetes.

Since men are the primary breadwinners in most households, they bear the weight of worrying about project deadlines, the promotion, the mortgage and bills and the financial and future wellbeing of their families. Such high levels of stress and demanding schedules can make even ten minutes of exercise a day seem like a daunting task. Add to that the responsibility of making healthy food choices through the day and most men would rather not bother at all. Additionally, society and the media have always focused more on women looking good and maintaining their weight. So, men rarely have any motivation to watch their weight. While overweight and obesity affect men and women in equal numbers, they take a special toll on male hormones, sexuality, and prostate health.

Obesity and testosterone
Simply stated - obesity lowers testosterone levels. A study of 1,667 men ages 40 and above found that each one-point increase in body mass index (BMI) was associated with a 2% decrease in testosterone. Another study of 1,862 men ages 30 and above found that a four-inch increase in waist size increased a man's odds of having a low testosterone level by 75%; for comparison, 10 years of aging increased the odds by only 36%.

Erectile dysfunction
Although men with erectile dysfunction (ED) often blame testosterone, several studies have linked abdominal obesity to ED.

BPH, PSA and Prostate Cancer – a numbers game!
Benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) becomes more common as men get older. It also becomes more common as men gain girth. A study of 25,892 men found that waist circumference was strongly associated with a man's risk of developing BPH.

Weight's on Your Mind?
Have an idea for an article or a question about a health topic?
Are you enjoying the newsletter?
Click here to send me an email
I want to hear from you!

Chocolate Raspberry Mousse
So simple! So incredibly delicious!

INGREDIENTS
1 ripe avocado
1 ripe banana
1 cup frozen raspberries
1/4 C raw cacao powder or cocoa powder
3/4 C unsweetened almond milk
1 t vanilla extract
1 T maple syrup

DIRECTIONS
1. Blend all ingredients in blender until smooth and creamy.
2. ENJOY!!
(Makes about 3 servings)

For extra yumminess, top with homemade whipped cream

Whip 1 pint of heavy whipping cream in a blender
Sweeten to taste with sweetener of choice
(agave, honey, stevia, etc.)

Did You Know About...
Sneezing!

- Sneezing is an important part of the immune process, protecting your body by clearing the nose of bacteria and viruses.
- Sneeze blessing stems from the ancient belief that sneezing is a near-death experience, and that a blessing will prevent your soul from escaping your body.
- Sneeze stops when you sneeze.
- A single sneeze can send 100,000 germs into the air.
- It’s not true that your heart stops when you sneeze.
- Your eyeballs cannot pop out of your head when you sneeze.
- A post-sneeze blessing stems from the ancient belief that sneezing is a near-death experience, and that a blessing will prevent your soul from escaping your body.

Click here to send me an email
I want to hear from you!

Mothers and fathers… where would we be without them?! In the May/June issue of the Living Healthy Newsletter, the spotlight is on men’s and women’s health. I also take a moment to share a new perspective on your allergies. Be sure to treat yourself to the recipe in this month’s issue—decadently good (and healthy!) if I do say so myself! As always, I try to bring you unique insights and information about health and wellness that will help you make new and powerful choices for your personal wellbeing. We’ve got three pages of amazing health information this month. I couldn’t help it... so much good stuff to share! Enjoy!

Lynise Anderson, N.D., C.N.C.
Take Control of Your Allergies

If you are all too aware of your watery eyes, stuffy nose, and clogged head but not sure of the cause, do some research. Since your allergies can be in response to virtually any food, airborne substance, or chemical, you must first figure out the culprit before knowing how to best treat the problem. Here are some ways to determine your triggers:

- Keep a journal of your symptoms, including where you went and what you did, ate, wore, and so on, when you had them. Look for patterns.
- A food-elimination diet can help you pinpoint problem foods.
- Ask your healthcare provider whether a blood test for food and chemical sensitivities might be worthwhile.

FIND FOOD FOES

If you suspect your morning bagel or grilled-cheese lunch might be causing your symptoms, it's time to find out. Temporarily following an elimination diet after a period of avoidance (such as 6 to 12 months); however, the allergy may return if the offending food is consumed more than every third or fourth day.

CLEAN HOUSE

Many of the most common allergens can be lurking in places you would not expect, such as your bedroom or under the kitchen sink. To cut down on household allergens try the following:

- Keep the humidity in your house below 50% to help prevent molds.
- Vacuum and mop regularly.
- Choose chemical-free bedding.
- Cover your mattress and pillows with hypoallergenic coverings.

If you have animal allergies, find out before visiting if friends and family have pets that may affect you and make arrangements to accommodate your food allergies.

- If you have animal allergies, find out before visiting if friends and family have pets that may affect you and plan accordingly.
- Hay fever sufferers should avoid open-air exercise and social events during the height of pollen season.

Supplements

- Wash linens weekly in hot water.
- Replace heating filters regularly.
- Use natural cleaning products.
- Use natural cosmetics, soaps, and shampoos.
- Don't allow pets access to sleeping areas.

THINK AHEAD

As you've probably already learned, paying attention to your body's reactions can help you head off allergy problems before they start. Some forethought will help you avoid getting caught off guard when you're out of your regular element:

- For dinner parties, weddings, and other social events that involve eating, inquire about making special arrangements to accommodate your food allergies.

Fit Families are “Together” Families

Family wellness is something that impacts every one of us. The healthier each individual family is, the healthier we can be as a whole.

May—Family Wellness Month, is a way to stress healthy family lifestyles and habits to families everywhere. Here are several things you can do with your family to increase your family’s emotional, physical and mental wellness.

- Change your eating habits—research shows that families that prepare and eat meals together have smarter kids and eat more nutritious meals.
- Get fit—take walks together after dinner; get a family membership to a local gym; buy bikes for everyone! Badminton anyone?!
- Explore nature together—hiking, biking, visit a state or national park, plant a garden—together.
- Visit family!
- Green your house.
- Appreciate each other—Go around the table after dinner and have everyone say what they love best about each other.
- Celebrate a TV free week.
- Make a family cookbook.
- Spend a morning picking your own fresh fruit at a local farm.
- Research your family tree together.
- Make a family movie or slide-show or your most memorable moments. Update often!!

He who takes medicine and neglects his diet wastes the skill of his doctors.

~Chinese Proverb

Campus Spotlight

Congratulations to the Mary Baldwin College Weight Watches group. Through persistence and commitment to personal well-being, the group lost over 120 pounds in 12 weeks! Bravo! Way to go!

Bridging the Gap to Wellness

Twenty HR professionals got together at Mary Baldwin College for the Spring 2015 HR Wellness Summit. The one-day event themed "Bridging the Gap" focused on building skills to help enhance, strengthen and advance our wellness programs across the consortium.
Fitness Facts for Women

Fitness can take a back seat for busy women, but it shouldn’t. Regular physical activity is important for so many reasons, starting with reducing the risk of osteoporosis, heart disease, breast and colon cancer, and depression. Plus, moving the body can improve sleep, keep excess pounds at bay as we age, and give us the energy to tackle an ambitious to-do list.

Try these fit finds to help you develop strength, muscle tone, endurance, and most importantly, better health!

SETTING UP FOR SUCCESS

Make a date. Schedule fitness into your calendar, as you would any other commitment. Even noting “lunch/walk” to prompt you to take a 15-minute walk around your place of work—inside or out—can improve the chances you’ll get moving.

Keep your date. Regularly schedule time with a workout buddy. If you know someone is waiting for you to go walking or hit the gym, you’ll be less likely to skip it.

Plan for it. Put your gym bag in your car, or by the door, so you are never unprepared. An extra pair of sneakers and sweats in the car can be enough to give you the opportunity for a quick walk before, during, or after work or other activities.

Make it a family affair. If you have a dog, make sure you’re keeping up with walks, and involve the whole family.

Walk around the soccer field as you’re cheering the kids on. Make quality kid-time active too. Toss a ball or Frisbee, hop on your bikes, or walk to the corner store. You’ll meet your fitness goals, and set an example for your kids that you take your own health as seriously as you take theirs.

Find fit friends. People who socialize with fit folks are more likely to be fit themselves. If your friends aren’t fit-minded, be the leader. Suggest fit activities for a get together, or incorporate fitness into other outings. For example, if it’s an option, walk or bike to and from a brunch gathering.

Focus on health. The biggest fitness benefits are realized when people go from being completely sedentary to doing just 15 to 20 minutes of activity daily. Even if you don’t lose a single pound, your health will improve if you move more!

TOOLS

Use your body as a tool. For effective muscle-building options, try pushups—begin on your knees if regular pushups are too difficult—dips using a chair, walking lunges holding a ½- to 1-gallon container of water in each hand, crunches (sit ups), and arm curls using canned food or books.

Stretch it. Use stretchy rubber fitness bands for resistance training. Stand on a band and perform arm curls and raises, and use circular bands around your legs during leg lifts and walking lunges—try forward, backwards, and side steps. Hang the bands on a visible doorknob to remind yourself to use them.

App-ly yourself. If you have a smartphone, use one of the many free fitness apps to track your fitness, set goals, and schedule activity sessions. Apps can be a great tool for those looking to track, and improve, their eating habits as well.

Cross train and track it. Keeping a fitness journal is an effective motivational tool, and helpful for cross training. For cross training, try an aerobic activity such as hiking, biking, or swimming three times per week; strength training—use fitness bands and body weight if you don’t have a gym membership—a couple of times weekly; and loosening up, with twice-weekly yoga, or 10 to 15 minutes of daily stretching.

Feel the beat. Listening to music can help you to power through workouts. According to the Wall Street Journal, the most motivating songs have 125 to 140 beats per minute, such as “Beat It,” by Michael Jackson; “Gangnam Style,” by Psy; and “Edge of Glory,” by Lady Gaga.

NUTRIENTS

Be smart about vitamins. Your body uses B vitamins to turn food into energy. The Bs include thiamine (vitamin B1), riboflavin (vitamin B2), niacin or niacinamide (vitamin B3), pantothenic acid (vitamin B5), pyridoxine (vitamin B6), biotin, folic acid, and cobalamin (vitamin B12). Try a B-complex supplement or multivitamin with Bs to fill in the dietary gaps as needed.

Prioritize minerals. Zinc for immunity, calcium and magnesium for strong bones, and iron (if you are or tend to be iron deficient) are a good place to start. Be sure you get enough vitamin D as well, particularly to aid calcium absorption. Supplements that contain zinc should also contain copper.

Power up with protein. Our bodies best build muscle when we eat 20 to 30 grams of protein per meal, but many women come up short on protein early in the day. Add protein-rich foods to breakfast, such as hardboiled eggs, Greek yogurt, or chia seeds to your fruit smoothie.

Factor in fat. Fat is a slow-digesting nutrient, so you don’t want too much of it just before or just after a workout. Healthy omega-3 fats, on the other hand, can dampen inflammation, a good thing when you’re starting a new workout routine. Eat more fish, walnuts, flaxseeds, and other nuts and seeds, and consider taking a 1- to 2-gram omega-3 fatty acid supplement.

Information provided herein is for educational purposes only and should not be used to replace the care and information received from your healthcare provider. Please consult a qualified healthcare professional with any health concerns you may have.