

Food for Thought

Weight Management

According to recent statistics, Americans are getting fatter. We are one of the most overweight countries in the world. Although Americans are getting fewer calories from fat, they are getting more calories overall. Obesity affects people of all ages. Overweight children seem to be on the rise, while activity seems to be hitting rock bottom.

There are many health risks from being overweight. **Even a 5 to 10 pound weight loss can substantially reduce your risk of disease.** Conversely, there are some dangers to being underweight.

DANGERS OF OVERWEIGHT

- Worsens hypertension and diabetes.
- Increases the load on the heart
- Hernias
- Varicose veins
- Increased cholesterol levels
- Gall bladder disease
- Stroke
- Breast & prostate cancer
- Muscle and joint problems
- Respiratory disease
- Worsens diabetes

DANGERS OF UNDERWEIGHT

Inability to regulate body temperature
Depression
Infertility

No body storage to help in the event of prolonged illness

CALORIES DO COUNT!

- Protein provides 4 calories per gram
- Carbohydrate provides 4 calories per gram
- Fat provides 9 calories per gram

Losing weight is difficult. Rapid weight loss slows the body's metabolic rate so that fewer calories are needed to maintain the same weight. Fad diets do not work in the long run.

Some common sense diet strategies:

1. Adopt a realistic plan, use the smallest servings listed on the MyPyramid. Aim for a weight loss of ½ to 1 lb. a week.
2. Eat foods that are nutrient dense.
3. Limit your fat intake to 30 percent calories from fat, 10 percent from saturated fats, and aim for zero (0) trans fats.
4. Read nutrition labels and watch the number of servings per package.
5. Use reduced fat or fat free foods.
6. Don't eliminate all your favorite foods.
7. Drink at least 8 – 10 glasses of water a day.
8. Use a small plate and take small portions.
9. Stop eating when you are not hungry.
10. Exercise regularly, at least 60 minutes per day.

There are three energy-yielding nutrients in food: protein, carbohydrate, and fat. Vitamins, minerals, and water do not have any caloric value. When the body takes in more calories than it needs, the excess is stored as body fat. All fats are a concentrated form of energy. Daily calories needs vary due to body size and activity level.