



Section 8

Weight Management:

The prevalence of obesity in the United States has doubled in the past two decades. Nearly one-third of adults are obese, that is, they have a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or greater. Over the last two decades, the prevalence of overweight among children and adolescents has increased substantially; it is estimated that as many as 16 percent of children and adolescents are overweight, representing a doubling of the rate among children and tripling of the rate among adolescents. Excess body fat has been found to lead to a higher risk for premature death, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, stroke, gall bladder disease, respiratory dysfunction, gout, osteoarthritis, and certain kinds of cancers.

For adults, a reduction of 50 to 100 calories per day may prevent gradual weight gain, whereas a reduction of 500 calories or more per day is a common initial goal in weight-loss programs. Similarly, up to 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity per day may be needed to prevent weight gain, but as much as 60 to 90 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per day is recommended to sustain weight loss for previously overweight people.¹

Physical Activity :

In 2002, 25 percent of adult Americans did not participate in any leisure time physical activities in the past month,² and in 2003, 38 percent of students in grades 9 to 12 viewed television 3 or more hours per day.³ Physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles resulting in energy expenditure⁴ People with higher levels of physical fitness are also at lower risk of developing chronic disease. Mortality rates from all causes of death are lower in physically active people than in sedentary people. Also, physical activity can aid in managing mild to moderate depression and anxiety.

To reduce the risk of chronic disease in adulthood: Engage in at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity, above usual activity, at work or home on most days of the week.

To help manage body weight and prevent gradual, unhealthy body weight gain in adulthood: Engage in approximately 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity activity on most days of the week while not exceeding caloric intake requirements.

To sustain weight loss in adulthood: Participate in at least 60 to 90 minutes of daily moderate-intensity physical activity while not exceeding caloric intake requirements.⁵



Physicians Nutritional Recommendations To Patients

1. Maintain a healthy body weight. Consume only as many Calories, as you expend daily.
2. Eat foods rich in calcium and iron. One glass of skim milk provides about one-third the RDA for calcium. Vegetables, such as broccoli, are also good sources of calcium. Iron is found in good supply in the meat food group.
3. Eat a moderate amount of plant and animal proteins. The recommended dietary goal for protein is about 10-12 percent of the daily Calories. This averages out to about 50 to 60 grams of protein per day; the current American intake is about 100 grams. Unfortunately, most of the protein Americans eat is of animal origin. Animal products are an excellent source of complete protein, but they tend to be higher in saturated fats and cholesterol compared to foods high in plant protein. Animal protein contains more iron and other minerals like zinc and copper than plant protein.

Four ounces of meat, fish, or poultry, combined with two glasses of skim milk, will provide the average individual with the daily RDA for protein, totaling about 45 grams of high quality protein. Combining this animal protein intake with plant foods high in protein, such as whole-grain products, beans and peas, and vegetables, will substantially increase your protein intake and more than meet recommended daily allowances.

4. Eat more complex carbohydrates, fiber, and natural sugars. In general, about 60 percent of your daily Calories should come from carbohydrates, about 50 percent from complex carbohydrates and the other 10 percent from simple, natural carbohydrates. Eat more legumes (beans and peas), and vegetables and fruits. Stress vegetables and fruits high in beta-carotene and vitamin C, such as carrots, peaches, and sweet potatoes. Deep yellow and orange fruits and vegetables, as well as dark green, leafy vegetables are usually good sources of these vitamins. Also, increase your intake of cruciferous vegetables, those from the cabbage family, such as broccoli, cauliflower, brussel sprouts, and all cabbages. These fruits and vegetables appear to protect you against lung, stomach, colon, and rectal cancer.

Complex carbohydrates have a high fiber content. Fruits, beans, and oat products are rich in the water-soluble type of fiber. The high fiber content of these foods is believed to be important in the prevention of diseases such as cancer of the colon and coronary heart disease.

5. Use simple sugars in moderation. The recommended dietary goal is to reduce consumption of refined sugar from the current level of 24 percent of the daily Calories to 10 percent or less.



Excessive consumption of refined sugar is associated with high blood triglyceride levels and sticky sugars are a major contributing factor to dental cavities.

6. The diet should be low in total fat, saturated fats, and cholesterol. The recommended daily intake of fat is less than 30 percent. In addition, the amount of saturated fat in the diet should be 10 percent or less, and cholesterol intake should be limited to 300 milligrams or less per day, or about 100 mg per 1,000 Calories.

Saturated fats and cholesterol are associated with high blood levels of triglycerides, a risk factor associated with atherosclerosis and coronary heart disease.

7. Consume salt and sodium in moderation. Try to limit sodium intake to less than 2,400 milligrams daily, which is the equivalent of 6,000 milligrams (6 grams) of salt. This amount will provide sufficient sodium for normal physiological functioning. Increased salt intake has been associated with high blood pressure.

8. Avoid taking dietary supplements in excess of the daily RDA. In general, dietary supplements of most vitamins and minerals are not necessary for individuals consuming a balanced diet.

9. Eat natural foods and avoid foods with additives, artificial coloring, nitrates and sulfites.

¹ <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/html/chapter5.htm>

² Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Surveillance for Certain Health Behaviors Among Selected Local Areas-United States, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2002, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), 53, No SS-05. <http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/>.

³ Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance-United States, 2003 MMWR 53(SS-2):1-29, 2004. <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/yrbs/>.

⁴ <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/terms/index.htm>

⁵ <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/html/chapter5.htm>