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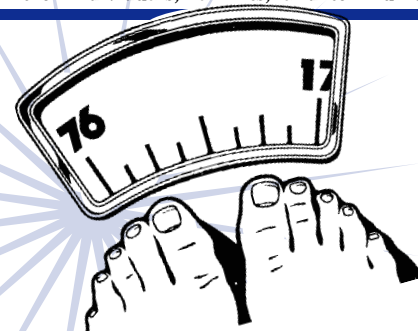
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Your clothes are tight in all the wrong places. The scale is gathering dust because you know the news is bad: You've gained weight. Cruise the nearest shopping mall and you quickly realize you are not alone. Obesity is so prevalent in America that the Centers for Disease Control classified it as an epidemic in 1997. More than 50 percent of Americans are overweight, the problem increasing by an alarming 6 percent just between 1998 and 1999.

What is wrong?

The simple truth remains that eating too much and exercising too little are the underlying causes of most obesity.

The American population is aging, our collective Basal Metabolic Rates (BMR) are slowing, and our muscle mass is decreasing. The resulting obesity is implicated in four of the 10 top causes of mortality and has significant emotional, financial and medical consequences.



Yet the way we attack the problem may be making it worse instead of better. We spend billions of dollars annually on weight-loss products, gimmicks and services that fail to address the eating and exercise habits that got us into trouble in the first place. Clearly, a lifestyle change rather than a quick fix is required.

Breaking the weight gain trend

Getting motivated to make a permanent shift is a challenge, but some people do succeed. Researchers evaluating data in the National Weight Control Registry (a collection of data, techniques, and tips from successful weight managers) found few people triumphed the first time. The findings of Ann M. Fletcher, MS RD, author of the best seller *Thin for Life: 10 Keys to Success from People Who Have Lost Weight & Kept It Off*, were the same.

Fletcher's interviews with 160 people who had maintained an average loss of 63 pounds for three or more years revealed most had tried five to six times before succeeding. Ultimately these "masters," as Fletcher calls them, decided they were capable of solving

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Extension's Mission

University Outreach and Extension serves Missouri by extending research-based knowledge and high-quality educational programs to address the high-priority needs of citizens at the local level.



Successful weight managers

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their own problems rather than expecting gimmicks or quick-fixes to work. Their personal insights allowed them to take action to change behaviors that contributed to weight gain. Finding ways to feed their souls and take care of their bodies were keys to success.

Here are some pointers to help you lose weight through healthy lifestyle changes.

Tune in to healthy eating.

Successful weight managers adopt a healthy eating plan, not a diet. A healthy eating plan exhibits balance, variety, and adequate amounts of food for energy and good nutrition. To figure a target calorie range for a loss of about one pound per week, multiply your

current weight by 10. This is your energy requirement for just existing, or your "Resting Metabolic Rate" (RMR). Don't go lower than your RMR, or your body will adjust its RMR downward.

If your RMR is less than 1400 calories, make up the difference with exercise, not fewer calories. Diets with fewer than 1400 calories make it difficult to get enough of some nutrients, promote temporary fluid loss instead of fat loss, and fail to provide a "satisfied" feeling. Eat enough and wisely, and trust your body to find its own healthy weight.

Fuel for the day - lose weight at night.

Noted sports nutritionist Nancy Clarke advises, "Successful diets begin with dinner, not breakfast." Eat a small, but reasonable, dinner. Avoid evening snacking. Fuel up in the morning with a good breakfast, then fuel throughout the day with one or two

smaller "lunches." You'll be more productive all day long, energized for action and activity, and less likely to overeat at dinner!

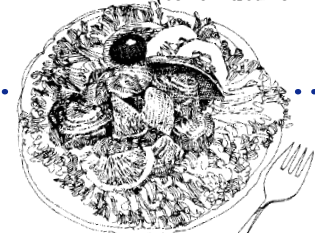
Learn what a portion is.

Restaurant portions have altered our perception of how much is enough. The average bagel is equivalent to three to four slices of bread!

Here's an easy way to visualize servings:

- 3 ounces meat or fish = deck of cards or size of your palm
- 1 cup of vegetables = size of your fist
- medium apple = size of a baseball
- ½ cup cooked pasta = ice cream scoop
- 1 ½ ounces cheese = pair of dice
- 1 teaspoon butter, margarine, jelly = tip of your thumb

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Sample Healthy Eating Plan – 1600 Calories

(About 55 percent from carbohydrate, 20 percent from protein and 20 -30 percent from fat. Plan meals using servings from each food group.)

6 grain servings, preferably whole grain:

- 1 serving (about 70 calories) =
 - * 1 slice bread
 - * ½ cup cooked pasta, rice potatoes, peas or corn
 - * 1 ounce of ready-to-eat cereal.

3 vegetable servings:

- 1 serving (about 25 calories) =
 - * 1 cup leafy greens
 - * ½ cup raw or cooked vegetables.
 - * ¾ cup vegetable juice.

2 fruit servings:

- 1 serving (about 60 calories) =
 - * 1 small piece of fruit
 - * ½ cup canned fruit
 - * ¾ cup juice.

2 meat servings:

- 1 serving (about 225 calories) =
 - * 2 to 3 ounces trimmed lean meat, poultry or fish.

(You can substitute 1 egg or ½ cup cooked dry beans for 1 ounce of meat, poultry or fish.)

3 milk servings:

- 1 serving (about 80 calories) =
 - * 1 cup skim milk or non-fat yogurt
 - * 1 ounce reduced-fat cheese.

3 fat servings:

- 1 serving (about 45 calories) =
 - * 1 teaspoon margarine vegetable oil, or mayo
 - * 1 tablespoon diet margarine
 - * 1 tablespoon salad dressing
 - * 2 tablespoons reduced-calorie salad dressing
 - * 1 strip bacon
 - * 1/8 avocado
 - * 5 olives
 - * 5 nuts.

Adjustments: If your daily target is 1400 calories, eliminate a meat serving and add a bread serving. If your daily target is more than 1600 calories, add servings from the bread, fruit and vegetable categories first, and then the meat group, if room, to meet your target calorie range.



Helping children handle stress

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Everyone experiences stress at one time or another, including children. Often adults are told not to worry, that children are resilient, and for the most part they are. However, children today have more demands and responsibilities placed on them than ever before and at younger ages.

Typically, their daily lives follow a routine and are predictable. But sometimes, even when they know what to expect, children can feel stressed. Also, when a new or unexpected event, demand or transition occurs, it can throw their coping skills out of balance.

Examples of stressors

- **Times of change:** starting school, getting used to a new baby, adjusting to a growing and changing body during preteen and teen years.
- **Problems at home:** conflict, illness or divorce.
- **Problems at school:** with a teacher, other children, or schoolwork.



Children display noticeable signs and symptoms when feeling stressed. The signs of stress often occur together, but no one child shows all of the symptoms at once. In addition, each child reacts differently to stress, even children in the same family.

A fearful or sad child may get stomach aches, cry, and withdraw from others. Another may become irritable, teasing siblings or peers and losing his or her temper. In school a stressed child may be easily distracted, have difficulty following directions or completing assignments, or have trouble concentrating.

Signs and symptoms of stress

- **Physical:** Headaches, sleep disturbances, stomach aches, changes in eating habits, wetting accidents (bed or clothing).
- **Emotional:** Fear, sadness, anxiety, irritability, worry, depression, anger.

- **Behavioral:** Crying, whining, losing their temper, rebelling.

- **Interactions with others:** Aggression, withdrawing, teasing or bullying, extreme shyness.

Whether your child is feeling stress from a normal everyday stressor or from something out of the ordinary, you can teach effective stress management and coping techniques. The following list provides specific examples of things you can do, or help your children do, to manage stress.



Coping with stress

- **Help your children talk about what is bothering them.** Don't force them to talk, but offer opportunities, such as at mealtime, bedtime or during car trips to and from school and other activities. Instead of asking, "What's wrong?" ask questions like, "How are things going at school with your teacher?" Do not criticize what your children say, or they will learn not to tell you about things that bother them.

- **Acknowledge feelings.** Let children know it is okay to feel angry, scared or lonely. Give children the names for their feelings and words to express how they are feeling.

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Helping children handle stress

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Coping with stress

- **Encourage vigorous physical activities.** If your children do not exercise often, try family activities like bike riding, hiking/walking, or swimming, or help them get involved in a physically challenging activity with their peers.
- **Spend special one-to-one time.** Find hobbies or other activities that you can do alone with your child. This allows for time to talk as well as time for having fun together.
- **Encourage healthy eating.** Teach your children by words and example that eating a healthy diet makes their bodies better able to handle stress.



- **Teach relaxation skills.** Show your children how to relax by remembering and imagining pleasant situations like a favorite vacation or happy experience.
- **Give back rubs and hugs.** A short back or shoulder rub can help your children relax and show them you care. Gentle physical touch is a powerful stress reliever.



- **Teach your children that mistakes are OK.** Let them know that all people, including you, make mistakes. Mistakes are for learning.
- **Be clear about rules and consequences.** Let your children know specifically what is expected and decide together what the consequences are for misbehavior. Then follow through.

- **Teach ways of handling difficult situations.** Talk through and role-play with your children ways to handle stressful situations. Pose situations (friendship, stealing, emergencies) and allow them to think through possible actions. Ask open-ended questions about what the solutions to problems could include, such as "What could we do about this?"



- **Tell stories about dealing with stress.** For example, if your child is afraid of a new situation, tell a story about how you once felt in a similar situation and what you did to cope, or find a library book that shows a child coping successfully with stress.
- **Be a role model for your children in handling your own stress in a healthy way.** If your children see you talking to others about problems, taking time to relax, and living a healthy lifestyle, your example is likely to rub off.

Adapted in part from publications by Virginia Molgaard, Iowa State University Extension, *Helping Children Manage Stress*, <http://www.exnet.iastate.edu>; and Karen DeBord, Ph.D., North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, *Helping Children Cope With Stress*, <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu>



Indoor air quality: Why is it important for my health?

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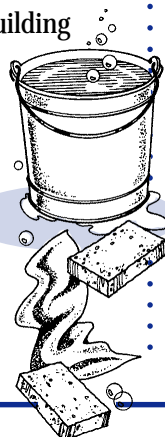


Most people are aware that outdoor air pollution can damage their health, but they may not know indoor air pollution can also have significant effects.

Indoor air levels of many pollutants may be two to five times higher than outdoor levels, and occasionally, more than 100 times higher, according to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) studies. These indoor air pollution levels are of particular concern because it's estimated that most people spend as much as 90 percent of their time indoors.

Over the past several decades, our exposure to indoor air pollutants has increased due to many factors, including construction of more tightly sealed buildings, reduced ventilation rates to save energy, use of synthetic building materials and furnishings, and use of chemically formulated personal care products, pesticides, and household cleaners.

In recent years, indoor air pollution has been ranked among the top five environmental risks to



public health in comparative risk studies performed by EPA and its Science Advisory Board (SAB). Indoor pollution sources that release gases or particles into the air are the primary cause of indoor quality problems in homes.

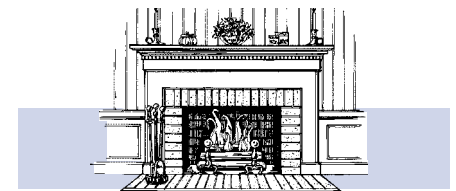
Inadequate ventilation can increase indoor pollutant levels by 1) not bringing in enough outdoor air to dilute emissions from indoor sources, and 2) not carrying indoor air pollutants out of the home. High temperature and humidity levels can also increase pollutant concentrations.

Many sources of indoor air pollution exist in any home:



- combustion sources (oil, gas, kerosene, coal, wood, and tobacco products)
- building materials and furnishings as diverse as deteriorated, asbestos-containing insulation; wet or damp carpet; and cabinetry or furniture made of certain pressed wood products
- products for household cleaning and maintenance, personal care, or hobbies
- central heating and cooling systems and humidification devices
- outdoor sources as such as radon, pesticides and outdoor air pollution.

The relative importance of any single source depends on 1) how much of a given pollutant it emits, and 2) how hazardous those emissions are. In some cases, factors such as age of the source and whether it is properly maintained are significant. For example, an improperly adjusted gas stove can emit significantly more carbon monoxide than one that is properly adjusted.



Some sources release pollutants continuously, such as building materials, furnishings, and household products like air fresheners. Other sources release pollutants intermittently, such as the following activities: smoking; use of unvented or malfunctioning stoves, furnaces, or space heaters; use of solvents in cleaning and hobby activities; use of paint strippers in redecorating activities; and use of cleaning products and pesticides in house-keeping. High-pollutant concentration can remain in the air for long periods after such activities.

If too little outdoor air enters a home, pollutants can accumulate to levels that can pose health and comfort problems. Pollutants can build up even in homes that are normally considered "leaky."

Learn more about indoor air quality!

New guidesheet available:
GH 5001 "Indoor Air Quality"
Extension Publications Library on Request (XPLOR)
<http://muextension.missouri.edu/xplor/hesguide/housing/gh5001.htm>

Successful weight managers

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Get active - then keep it up!

Concentrate first on building exercise, like walking, consistently into your daily routine. It may take months to work up to an intensity and duration that show up on the scale, so be patient. But persist and build. Observe how your overall fitness and lung capacity improves.

Don't overlook strength training.

Weight training, yoga or Pilates rebuild muscle mass required to burn calories throughout the day. In fact, strength training may even be more helpful initially than aerobic exercise because it raises the RMR critical to sustained weight loss.

"Strength training requires more than lifting soup cans," advises Dr. Bill Evans, Director of the Nutrition, Metabolism and Exercise Program at the University of Arkansas. Three sets of 10 repetitions each, working at 80 percent of the weight you can lift just once, is required. (Remember to exhale!)

Even two strength workouts a week will increase lean muscle and daily activity.

"Successful losers" report in the National Weight Control Registry that they work off an average of 400 calories per day -- 2800 per week -- in exercise. All exercise does not have to be in the form of "work-outs." Bits and pieces, such as housework, taking stairs at work or walking the dog, supplement formal exercise sessions. So find a workable blend of formal aerobic exercise, strength training, and just plain moving around.

Rest and refresh.

Stress-busting techniques such as meditation and deep breathing, in addition to exercise, are more healthful alternatives than turning to food, caffeine, alcohol or medications. A little more sleep probably wouldn't hurt either. Two out of three Americans sleep no more than seven hours a night, instead of the eight recommended by the National Sleep Foundation. Before the electric light bulb extended our workable day, we averaged 10 hours sleep. Tune in to what your body tells you; recharge with a little more sleep.

Adopt a healthier lifestyle.

Resolve to quit dieting. Change the focus from pounds and clothing sizes to health-related parameters. A healthier lifestyle, which includes sensible eating, regular exercise and rest, can produce more permanent success and a healthier body. Focus on improved energy, mobility, and lowered cholesterol, blood sugar, or blood pressure that come from taking care of ourselves. Healthy habits will allow our bodies to find their own healthy weight.

Tired of diets that don't work?

Learn how to stop dieting and start living in a healthy way.

Find out more about

"A New You: Living in a Healthy Body," a unique program offered by University Outreach and Extension. Learn a whole new way of looking at your body, yourself and your health.

Contact: Linda Rellergert, 636-970-3000.

Life Times

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