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A NATION OF OVEREATERS

BY MATT SMITH, DIRECTOR HRD

At a recent conference sponsored by the Utah State Council on Health and Wellness, the theme centered on the American lifestyle and how it is contributing to the dramatic rise of health care costs in this country. Today, around \$1.4 trillion is spent on health care in this country, equal to \$5,000 for every person in the country. This is expected to grow to over \$3 trillion by 2012. A primary reason for this is the increasing number of health problems caused by lifestyle related diseases of our own choosing.

In 1900, the three leading causes of death in this country were influenza, pneumonia, and tuberculosis - all communicable diseases. Today the three leading causes of death are tobacco related illnesses, diet and activity related illnesses, and alcohol related illnesses - all lifestyle related and preventable. Tobacco use has been the cause of more deaths than any plague in the history of the world. However, diet and obesity related illnesses will soon overtake tobacco as the number one cause of death in this country.

Leading Causes Of Death - 1900

- ◆ Influenza
- ◆ Tuberculosis
- ◆ Pneumonia

Leading Causes Of Death - 2000

- ◆ Tobacco Related Illnesses
- ◆ Diet & Activity Related Illnesses
- ◆ Alcohol Related Illnesses

The average American now consumes approximately 3800 calories per day, when the recommended range of caloric intake is 1600 to 2000 calories for an adult woman and 2000 to 2400 for an adult man. The result is that around one out of two Americans is now overweight, a 25% increase since 1970. A full 45 million Americans are obese (over 20% above their ideal body weight), a 50% increase in the last 10 years.

One of the causes of this trend is "supersizing", a practice common to many fast food franchises. At McDonald's for example, the original burger, drink, and fries contained 585 calories. One of today's super-sized value meals delivers 1550 calories with around 100 grams of fat (about one week's worth). And there is a great deal of research to show that an American will eat whatever is put in front of him or her. We clean our plate as well as any culture in the world - we just put a lot more on it.

Of the 30 fastest growing franchises in the country, 13 of them are fast food franchises. The second fastest growing cable channel is the food network. Our lifestyle is now clearly oriented to eating whatever we can grab at the take out window or cook up in the microwave. According to one study, around 200 million Americans do not know by 4:00 in the afternoon what they will have for dinner that evening.

The effect of these trends on America's work force is dramatic. Among U. S. workers today:

- ◆ One in four have high blood pressure
- ◆ Fifty percent have blood cholesterol values greater than 200 mg/dl
- ◆ Over 15% have Type 2 diabetes
- ◆ The average worker has seven chronic risk conditions

Reducing caloric intake and increasing activity levels are critical to reversing these trends but neither of these is easy. As a society, we have become much more sedentary. Only about 15% of us engage in regular vigorous activity, a dramatic decrease since 1984 when around 50% of us reported some kind of rigorous physical activity.

As for dieting, some interesting research explains why dieting is often ineffective. The person who is overweight and who diets to get to normal weight, because of the body's natural protection mechanisms, burns an average of only 42 calories per hour compared to the 50 calories per hour burned by the person who has maintained normal weight. This makes it far easier for people dieting to regain the weight they had lost after they are no longer on a diet. No wonder only five percent of Weight Watchers customers reach their target weight and only one half of one percent maintain their target weight for one year.

If practiced by the average American, a well balanced diet and appropriate activity levels would clearly reverse the trend of obesity and overeating in our society. However, at least for now, the trend shows no signs of slowing down.



UPCOMING EVENTS

TO REGISTER, OR FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
www.byu.edu/wellness OR CALL 8-5884

ALL EVENTS ARE  **FREE** UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

- 1 INDOOR/OUTDOOR: 3K FUN WALK**
JANUARY 16, 11:45 A.M. -12:45 P.M.
REGISTER @ SFH INDOOR TRACK (Register during the first half hour)

Come put your best foot forward for the new year by joining us for some great exercise, healthy snacks, and to enter to win great prizes. Learn as you walk more about some of the latest Wellness trends in the United States and receive a new Wellness t-shirt upon completion of the walk. **Participants will have the option of taking either the indoor or outdoor 3K route.**

- 2 DAY-LONG* BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENING**
JANUARY 20, *8:00 A.M. - 10:45 A.M., 2 - 5:00 P.M.
3223 WSC

Stay on top of your important health numbers by dropping on by this FREE screening. No appointment necessary. Sponsored by the BYU Nursing Program.

- 3 WINTER PARTNER FITNESS CHALLENGE: “HOWDY PARTNER!”, FEBRUARY 2 - MARCH 20**
REGISTRATION DEADLINE: JANUARY 27



Grab a partner and saddle up for a healthy ride! We'll be exploring new horizons with this brand new fitness challenge. Done for the first time ever in partnerships of 2, we'll focus on basic concepts of wellness for 7 weeks while encouraging and building life-long healthy habits. A great way to get motivated, increase health, and build bonds with a spouse or coworker (*one member of the partnership must be a full-time BYU employee). Register online.

What's NEW:

- ◆ Done in partnerships of 2
- ◆ New requirements structure--less complicated but packed with variety
- ◆ Achievement and prizes broken down into levels to accomodate a variety of fitness levels

CHEF'S CORNER

LOW-FAT CHILI AND CORN - MAKES 6 (3/4C) SERVINGS

1 lb lean ground beef, rinsed and drained (*see tip below)
 1 medium onion, chopped
 3 TB chili powder
 2 tsp. cumin
 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
 1 tsp. salt
 1/8 tsp Tabasco sauce (optional)
 16-oz. can chopped tomatos, undrained
 2 c. frozen whole kernel corn

Brown ground beef and onion in large skillet. Rinse and drain (see tip below). Stir in seasonings. Add tomatoes and corn. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer 20 minutes before serving.

Calories per serving: 230

Fat per serving: 5 g

***Low fat cooking tip:** To make ground beef leaner - place the meat in a colander after browning. Rinse with hot water and then drain thoroughly. This will cut an addition 5 grams of fat per serving.

DID YOU KNOW?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently released a list of the 10 most common sources of fat in American's diets:

1. Margarine
2. Whole Milk
3. Shortening
4. Mayo and salad dressing
5. American cheese
6. Ground beef
7. Low-fat milk
8. Eggs
9. Butter
10. Ice cream

Many of these are easy to reduce and still maintain most of the flavor or have low-fat options. Which one can you cut back in your diet?