

Obesity Prevention in Today's World

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America is facing a national crisis with obesity. It is the second, only to tobacco, killer in America. Here are some facts that might help with the awareness that we need to spread.

- Obesity costs America over \$117 billion dollars a year
- 2 out of every 3 (65%) of Americans are overweight.
- 1 out of ever 6 youth are overweight.
- 400,000 Americans will die this year from obesity related issues.

Related issues are:

- **Diabetes,**
- **Cardiovascular Disease,**
- **Cancer,**
- **Arthritis,**
- **Pulmonary complications**

Obesity is considered to be 30 pounds overweight. These conditions have lead to obesity:

- **Increased portion size**
- **Added caloric beverages (soda's)**
- **Intake of low fiber foods (less whole wheat products)**
- **Decreased water consumption**
- **Decreased milk**
- **Decreased physical activity**

Why has this happened to America and her children?

- **Increased variety and availability of foods+**
- **Good taste of foods**
- **Convenient foods**
- **Marketing programs**
- **Americans like a good deal-portions and free products ("Buy one-get one")**
- **Lack of family Supervision (snacks, meal times)**

- **Physical activity has been replaced with more sedentary activities.**

Added calories that are **nutrient deficient** are added into diets in form of soft drinks, cookies, candies, and cereals. Soft drinks are the largest addition of calories.

Utah's state of youth obesity is better than most states. Utah has the lowest obesity rate for youth in America, only 1 in 5 children are overweight. Utah's children also consume more fruits and vegetables a day compared to other states. Forty four percent of them are consuming fruits and vegetables 1-2 times a day.

What can we do?

- **Encourage families to eat together.**
- **Encourage 5 fruits and vegetables a day.**
- **Encourage more whole wheat foods.**
- **Promote and educate about proper serving size.**
- **Encourage a reduction in sugars, fats and carbohydrates.**
- **Stock vending machines with healthier choices.**
- **Encourage healthy behaviors.**
- **Encourage needed physical activities.**

Even small changes can become economically positive. We can not expect science to solve this problem.

Yes, there is an obesity epidemic. We can all help reduce it. Let's eat healthier and get America moving!

We can change America from fat to fit.



For additional information and educational materials, contact your local Utah State university Extension office.