



The

Pulse

Weight Loss and Lifestyle Choices

"Sausage gravy and biscuits, bacon and eggs, fried chicken, country ham, green beans with butter, sweet tea..."

We've all heard that Americans, particularly Southerners, are overweight including our children. Many deny they have a problem but many are truly concerned about their health and the consequences of obesity. Being obese contributes to serious medical problems including heart disease, hypertension, and type 2 diabetes as well as many debilitating conditions such as sleep apnea, chronic fatigue, depression, dementia, arthritis, and early death. Further, excess weight affects a person's overall quality of life, including prejudice for employment.

Although genes play a role in weight, they aren't completely to blame. Weight gain results from too many calories and too little activity. A lack of knowledge about food and nutrition, especially calories and portion size, contributes to overeating. Mood may also play a role in eating especially depression, stress, and boredom. Alcohol can contribute to weight gain as it is high in calories, a potent appetite stimulant, and a relaxant that promotes overeating. Studies have shown that as little as 5% of weight loss can improve health but losing 10% dramatically reduces the risk of weight-related health problems.

Caloric intake is an important consideration for

weight loss. There are 3,500 calories in a pound of body fat so cutting back just 500 calories a day leads to a pound lost in a week. Adding 20—30 minutes of vigorous activity five days a week could double the loss. For sensible weight loss, government guidelines suggest men limit calories to 1,600 a day and women 1,300. Making wise foods choices is paramount. For example, switching from one can of regular soda to diet each day saves 120 calories, a loss of one pound in a month. Other suggestions include:

- Limit eating out to once weekly
- Avoid fried/fatty foods
- Reduce portions
- Eat three meals with one or two snacks to avoid hunger pangs
- Choose healthy foods low in calories but nutrient-dense which have a filling effect such as whole grains, fruits and vegetables.

In time, changes in lifestyle choices can lead to significant weight loss.

In recent years pharmaceutical companies have undertaken significant research into drugs that affect weight regulation, glucose and lipid metabolism and smoking cessation. ACOMPLIA by Sanofi Aventis is now approved in the European Union and is awaiting

review in the US by the FDA. ACOMPLIA works by blocking the same hunger-causing receptors that marijuana stimulates (the munchies). It also raises HDL (good cholesterol), and lowers triglycerides and glucose. Side effects may include nausea and anxiety in some people.

Charlottesville Medical Research has participated in obesity studies and plans to continue research with weight regulating drugs along with calorie reduction and regular exercise. The guidance of a registered dietician is an important part of our studies because there is still no magic bullet for weight loss without cutting calories.

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What healthy choices can I make?

127 MILLION

Americans are overweight or obese

23.3%

of adults in Virginia are obese

80%

of type II diabetes is related to obesity

Charlottesville Medical Research Current and Future Research Studies

- Pediatric Meningitis Vaccine
- Osteoarthritis of the knee
- Migraine
- Pediatric Ragweed Allergy
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Restless Leg Syndrome
- Obesity



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