

Obesity

According to Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 61 percent of adults are overweight or obese, half of them are obese and 16 percent of young people aged 6-19 are considered overweight. The Surgeon General's 2001 report concluded that obesity is associated with approximately 300,000 deaths annually. The National Institutes of Health estimates the health care cost due to obesity in 2000 as \$117 billion dollars. Yet over 60 percent of Americans do not engage appropriate amounts of physical activity recommended by CDC. In Texas, the obesity population has doubled in the last decade from 1990 to 2002. CDC's 2004 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) indicated Texas is one of the ten leading states with obesity prevalence over 25 percent.

Body Mass Index (BMI) is widely used in determining overweight and obesity in adults because it correlates with the amount of body fat in most people. A BMI between 25 and 29.9 is considered overweight and greater than 29.9 is obese. BMI is calculated by dividing the weight in pounds by the square of height in inches and multiplying by 703 [Weight in lbs. / (height in inches)² x 703]. Obesity was officially considered a disease in 2005. It is a condition of energy imbalance - energy consumption (eating) exceeding energy expenditure (physical activity). Individual behavior, genetics, environment, culture and socioeconomic status all contribute to producing obesity. Obese and overweight individuals have increased risk of developing chronic diseases such as coronary heart disease, several types of cancer, type II diabetes, stroke, sleep apnea and psychological disorders. Morbidity related to obesity increases as BMI increases. As the prevalence of obesity increases, related morbidity increases which then leads to an increase in health care cost due to obesity.

Behavior and environment have been implicated as major factors and are targeted for prevention and treatment. These are also easier to modify while genetics, culture and socioeconomic status are difficult to modify in the short term. Life behavior modifications such as moderate exercise and healthy eating are practical ways individuals can control their weight, maintain weight loss and reduce the risk of developing some diseases particularly heart disease.

For more information please consult Obesity under CDC's wet site at www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/ and Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005 at www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines/ Health and Fitness Information under the American College of Sports Medicine at www.acsm.org/health+fitness/index.htm

Texas Medical Center announces photography contest

The Texas Medical Center is holding a photography contest for employees and their families and the students of the TMC member institutions. A photographer may submit three entries. The contest entries will be due by Tuesday, April 25, 2006, and the winners will be announced on Thursday, May 4, 2006. Categories are:

- Historic (could be a picture of the TMC area at some time in the past or could be a picture of the practice of medicine or health care in early Houston)
- Human interest (could depict medical or health technology; a health care provider or doctor with a patient, etc.)
- Medical/health care personalities
- TMC scenes and buildings
- How a particular TMC building grew over time

For rules and more information click here or call 713-791-8850.