



FEATURE ARTICLE

Obesity and the Great Diet Debate

by Margaret Twichell, RN, Wellness Coordinator

United States Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher said that although the country has conquered infectious diseases such as smallpox and polio, it has not conquered the rising epidemic of obesity. Currently, 22.3% of Americans are obese. This is up from 12.8% in 1962. Additionally, obesity costs the United States \$238 billion per year in expenses from diseases which are primarily caused by obesity, such as diabetes, stroke and heart disease.

For those interested in shedding some extra pounds, there are a plethora of options within the diet world: Dr. Atkins, Carbohydrate Addicts, Sugar Busters, Mayo Clinic, and Cabbage Soup. The diets are many and the controversy is plentiful with each of these options.

Dr. Atkins, Carbohydrate Addict and Sugar Busters diets

Cardiologist Dr. Atkins developed a diet that consists of consuming high protein food to shift your body into the state of ketosis: where fats are burned for energy instead of carbohydrates. Ultimately, the fat stored on your body is used for fuel. Although the benefits of this diet are speedy initial weight loss, lower blood pressure in hypertensive patients and stabilization of glucose in hypoglycemic patients, there are numerous restrictions that make this diet one that not everyone can stick to. Banned from this diet are the following: caffeine, alcohol, sugars, fruits and fruit juices, candy, gum or breath mints. In order for this diet to succeed, it is essential that you be vigilant and determined to live with these restrictions on a temporary basis. The Sugar Busters and Carbohydrate Addict diets are fashioned as a variation of the Atkins program.

Carol Holman, RD, Head of the Department of Dietetics at MGHS, states that her department has recently been inundated with questions regarding high protein, low carbohydrate diets. The following are some of the main health risks associated with the consumption of a high protein, low carbohydrate diet.

Poor Long-Term Weight Control

It is very difficult to maintain the high protein, low carbohydrate diet over a long period of time due to the

restrictions of certain foods. For lipid and weight management, "long term" must be the key.

Osteoporosis

High protein consumption often increases urine calcium losses, which can add to the risk of osteoporosis.

Gout and kidney stones

Increased intake of foods high in purine such as meat, poultry, nuts, seeds, eggs and seafood, can lead to an excess of uric acid in the body. Elevated levels of uric acid in the blood may lead to needle-like uric acid crystals in the joints. In addition, uric acid and calcium oxalate stones are more likely to form on a high protein diet than on a diet that is higher in carbohydrates with more fruits and vegetables.

Diabetes

People who require insulin due to diabetes are at a risk of hypoglycemia if adequate carbohydrates are not consumed.

Reduced athletic performance

Athletic performance is reduced on a low carbohydrate diet. Since the 1930s, it has been known that a high carbohydrate diet can enhance endurance during strenuous athletic events.

Fainting

When the body is deprived of carbohydrates, there is a loss of fluid and electrolytes and reduced sympathetic nervous activity which can result in dizziness or even fainting when you stand up quickly.

Ketosis

In order to maintain a nitrogen balance, the brain requires 140 grams of glucose per day. This requires eating 155 grams of protein. Under this plan, your body would still use ketones for energy (burn fat for energy).

Phytochemicals

On a high protein, low carbohydrate diet, fruits and vegetables are restricted which limit the intake of phytochemicals, which have been linked to reducing risks of

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HEALTH

Seven Steps to Better Sleep



These are the days most Upper Peninsula residents eagerly anticipate. With warmer temperatures and daylight till nearly 10 pm, we may try to cram as much into our days as possible. In your effort to maximize your time, don't forget to pay attention to your sleep habits to also maximize your performance.

Go to bed and get up at the same time every day—even on weekends. By doing so you will help regulate your body's internal clock to get the 7 – 8 hours sleep most adults require. Avoid naps, which can affect your ability to fall asleep at night.

Establish a relaxing bedtime routine. Try a warm bath, light reading or pleasant music to help you fall asleep easier. Fact: Listening to classical or New Age music at bedtime has been shown to help insomnia sufferers fall asleep. One possible reason is that the music matches body rhythms and slows the heart rate.

Skip stimulants such as caffeine and nicotine from late

afternoon on. And don't use alcohol to induce sleep. As its effects wear off, your brain actually grows more alert.

Don't rely on sleeping pills. They can ultimately disrupt your sleep/wake cycle if you depend on them too much.

Be sure to squeeze in some daytime fitness. In one recent study, regular exercisers not only slept almost an hour longer than non-exercisers; they also fell asleep in half the time.

Breathe easier. People who suffer from sleep apnea (the condition in which breathing stops for 15 – 45 seconds during sleep) may actually awaken hundreds of times during the sleep and not realize it. Helpful tricks to reduce sleep apnea are: lying on your side rather than on your back for sleep, weight loss if you are obese, and smoking cessation. Talk to a physician if problems persist despite your best efforts.

For more information about sleep, call MGHS Neurophysiology at 225-3047 or the National Sleep Foundation at 888-673-7533.

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A cooperative effort of Marquette General Health System & Auxiliary

The Health Information Center continues to increase its supply of materials available to patrons. American Heart Association materials have been added as well as poison prevention information and diabetes videos and cookbooks.

Visit the Health Information Center, located on the first floor of the MGHS Patient Tower. The center is open Monday through Friday, 10 am-2 pm. Questions? Call 906-225-4950 or 1-800-562-9753, Ext. 4950. Or send a request to MGHS HIC, 580 West College Avenue, Marquette, MI 49855


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Upper Michigan Heart Institute	906-225-4600
Upper Michigan Cancer Center	906-225-3500
Women's & Children's Center	906-225-3081
Poison Information Network	906-225-3497

WellAware

A courtesy of the Wellness Institute of Marquette General Health System. If you would like more information on wellness-related issues or would like to be on our mailing list, please call us at 906-225-4802 or 1-800-562-9753 ext. 4802. Margaret Swetish Twichell, Editor; Meredith Ammons Ollila, Community Relations, Layout & Design; and Nicole Couveau, Wellness Secretary. Printed by MGHS Print Shop.

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Obesity and the Great Diet Debate

certain diseases. Phytochemicals are not available in a pill form.

Supplements

Fruits, vegetables and whole grains supply an array of vitamins and minerals which may best be absorbed from food rather than a vitamin/mineral supplement. In fact, these supplements can be harmful if taken inappropriately.

Fiber

When you eliminate foods high in fiber such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes, the risk for cancer, diabetes and heart disease increases.

Holman recommends that at least 40% of calories consumed come from carbohydrates, and that individuals consume not less than 1,200 calories per day. She also advises that individuals contemplating a new or different food plan get instruction from a registered dietitian before to insure nutritional adequacy.

For those who are determined to subscribe to a low-carb diet, Dr. Nelson Gencheff of Cardiology Associates of the Upper Peninsula, stresses the importance of adding

green leafy vegetables, such as broccoli, brussels sprouts, and cabbage to the high protein Atkins regime to add much needed fiber and vitamin A to the diet.

Before beginning any weight loss plan, the Wellness Institute suggests that you discuss the best plan for you with your primary care practitioner or registered dietitian.

Mayo Clinic Diet

According to the Mayo Clinic Health Oasis website, there is no Mayo Clinic diet. One interpretation of this supposed diet guarantees a specific weight loss, such as 52 pounds in 10 weeks. Another version supposedly encourages people to eat "until you cannot eat anymore" at each meal.

"Don't skip the bacon at breakfast,

or omit the salads, it's the combination of foods that burns fat," said Jennifer K. Nelson, RD, Mayo Clinic. "We don't give out any generic, one-size-fits-all, diet. Instead, we tailor plans for each individual that include what to eat, exercise tips and good health habits."

She recommends comparing your current eating habits with the USDA's Food Guide Pyramid.

Cabbage Soup Diet

The Cabbage Soup diet consists of preparing and consuming a special soup of vegetables, such as canned tomatoes, onions, peppers, celery, carrots and dry onion soup mix. This soup is eaten daily in combination with other specific foods to promote weight loss. It is professed that a participant can lose up to 15 pounds in the first week on this plan.

Before beginning any weight loss plan, the Wellness Institute suggests that you discuss the best plan for you with your primary care practitioner or registered dietitian. For additional information, contact the Wellness Institute at 225-4802.

Readiness levels:

1. You are not ready or not intending to change. (Things are OK the way they are, even if there is a health risk.)
2. You intend to change at some later time. (You need to make changes, but it's hard to get started.)
3. You intend to change in the next 30 days. (You know what has to be done.)
4. You have made some changes. (It has been difficult and you need support to keep going.)
5. You have confidence in your ability to continue with your wellness plan. (You're getting healthier.)

Making changes:

1. Increase awareness by gathering information. Look at reasons to change and think about the results of your current behavior.
2. Make a list of the benefits of change and what you would have to do to achieve them.
3. Make a plan, set a start date, and write a contract with yourself. Focus on the "positive."
4. Seek continuing support from those around you. If you relapse, start over again. Keep going.
5. You still need support. Evaluate your progress and maintain your gains. Look for a variety of ways to maintain your good health.

What if you know that you need to lose weight, and the physiologic indicators note that you would be healthier if you did lose weight, but you don't yet have the motivation that it would take to embark on a weight loss plan? Experts in the theory of behavior change note that to get yourself moving from the "I should" stage to the "I can and I will stage," you must first evaluate your willingness, or readiness, to change. Once you've determined your readiness level, follow the suggestions for making a change.

PREVENTION

Anger Management Tips

Everybody knows that emotional and physical health are linked. Anger can contribute to such maladies as headaches, stomach distress, and heart attack. To help control your anger, practice the following techniques:

COUNT TO 10. When something angers you, take 3 or 4 deep breaths and exhale slowly. Count to 10, and ask yourself, "will it really matter a year from now?"

WALK IT OFF. Go for a short walk until you calm down. It is helpful to find a quiet place where you can think out loud about the situation. Focus on developing as many optional responses as you can.

KEEP A LOG. Monitor

hostile thoughts to discover how frequently your temperature rises. **Benefit:** This will help to sort out the causes of your anger, which are something over which you have no control, but are manageable.

ASK FOR HELP. If outbursts seem uncontrollable, seek help from your EAP program, or other trained professional. Other helpful actions may include meditation, prayer, or avoidance of the situation.

You physical health may depend on how you deal with your emotional health. For best health keep both elements of your person in balance.

For more information regarding anger management, call the MGHS CARES crisis line at 225-3994.



WELLAWARE, a newsletter written by, and for, the people of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, is available for purchase. For more information, contact Margaret Twichell at 225-4802, or toll free at (800) 562-9753, ext. 4802. This newsletter cannot be duplicated without expressed written consent of the Wellness Institute at Marquette General Health System.

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