

## Obesity

Obesity- there, I've said it! Most of you, I'm sure, have given this ugly word a thought or two, especially in light of our most recent holiday season. I believe it's time to give it a little more than just a thought and, more importantly, start to seriously consider **acting** on these thoughts before this word

becomes a serious detriment to your health! Obesity is fast becoming an epidemic in this country as the numbers below will demonstrate. And please don't make the mistake of assuming that it's just a cosmetic issue. Far from it. As you will see, obesity can have a drastic effect on your life, in all the

wrong ways. Frankly, it can kill. According to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, there are nearly 100 million Americans – including 40 million Baby Boomers – who are overweight or even obese, and therefore, face risks of various chronic diseases in addition to potential muscular-skeletal problems.

This, in spite of the fact that we are **supposedly** the generation that is the savviest in terms of exercise and good eating habits! Did you know, for example, that between the ages of 30-39, **47%** of women in the USA are considered either overweight/obese. And just in case you guys though I forgot about you, between the ages of 50-59, **73%** of us are overweight/obese! These are not insignificant numbers!

But what *is* obesity? Well, I'm glad you asked. There is a handy formula to help us calculate whether our middle-age spread is going, or has gone, too far. It is called the Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI is calculated by dividing your weight in pounds by your height in inches squared, then multiplying by 704.5. A desirable BMI is 21. Overweight begins at 25 and **obesity is 30 or higher.**

The medical implications of this are many. Large clinical studies link obesity to heart disease, stroke, diabetes, gall bladder disease, osteoarthritis and some cancers. Yes, I said cancer. The American Heart Association has recently reclassified obesity upward to a major risk factor for a heart attack.

**Anyone who has gained more than 25 pounds since age 18 should seriously consider seeing a primary care physician.** And please do this **before** you start an

exercise program. You could well be on the road to diabetes or have signs of impending coronary artery disease and not know it. Only a thorough medical check-up will tell you whether you are developing any of these conditions. So while you should be lauded for wanting to adjust your lifestyle to combat this problem, get a check-up first to make sure you can follow-thru with these admirable desires **safely!**

You also may be thinking that you've tried shedding pounds before to achieve your "ideal" weight and have been disappointed. It is perfectly natural to feel this way but you shouldn't. I suggest not thinking about the term "ideal", instead think "healthier". It's a lot better that individuals who are overweight or obese focus on **a healthier weight, rather than the possibly unachievable "ideal" weight.** Remember, "Ideal" is just a bunch of numbers on some insurance chart- they do **not** take into consideration individual nuances that may make the "ideal" impossible to attain. A "healthier" weight is much more realistic and can translate into just a 5-10 percent weight loss. It **will** make a difference.

Good- now you're motivated. That's the first and, in my opinion, the most important step. The next step is action. That starts with a visit to your physician to discuss the plan that is best suited to your particular needs. But whatever that plan is, please keep one very important fact in mind - **there is no quick fix!** This will be the start of a marathon that will hopefully last the rest of your life, not a sprint for a couple of months. Get together with your primary care physician to develop a program of weight reduction and maintenance. Remember, it **can** be done and **is** being done everyday. Good luck!

.....  
*There are nearly 100 million Americans, including 40 million Baby Boomers, who are overweight or even obese.*  
.....

3211 Internet Blvd  
Suite 280  
Frisco, TX 75034

Phone: 469 633 9700  
Fax: 469 633 9701

www.drcheco.com