

Health@News

Your Guide to a Healthier Lifestyle

VOLUME 8 ♦ ISSUE #1



Currently in the United States, sixty-six percent of adults are overweight or obese. People tend to gain unnecessary weight for many reasons including habits, genes, illness, certain medicines, and emotions. Achieving or maintaining a healthy weight is vital to good health and contributes to healthy cholesterol, blood pressure, and blood glucose levels. Additionally, a healthy weight helps to prevent many diseases including type 2 diabetes, osteoarthritis, cardiovascular disease, and some cancers. A weight loss of as little as 5 to 15 percent of body weight over 6 months or longer has been shown to improve health, according to the National Institutes of Health.

THE BASICS OF WEIGHT CONTROL

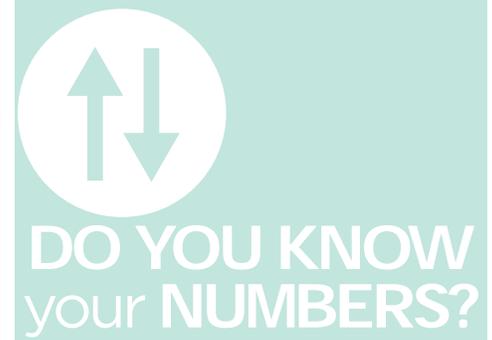
To maintain a healthy weight, one must balance the calories consumed through food and drink with the energy expended by the body through physical activity. To lose weight,

one must consume fewer calories than are expended through physical activity. Improving both dietary and physical activity habits is essential to effective and healthy weight control.

A HEALTHY DIET

- Choose fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fat-free or low-fat dairy products, lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and nuts.
- Eat foods low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt and added sugars.
- Serve yourself appropriate portions. When eating out, eat half of the meal and take the remainder home.
- Drink water, fat-free milk, and 100% juice rather than sodas and other sugary drinks.

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Participating in regular screenings is one of the best and most important ways to take care of your health and well-being. It is vital to have blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose levels, as well as body mass index, checked periodically and to seek treatment if necessary. Fortunately, early detection and treatment of these conditions can in many cases, help to prevent serious health consequences.

BLOOD PRESSURE

Blood pressure is a measure of the force your blood exerts on your blood vessels as it circulates through your body. High blood pressure, or hypertension, indicates that your heart is working harder than normal, and the added strain increases the possibility of heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, and other serious problems. Fortunately, high blood pressure is easily detected and can be controlled with proper treatment. Blood pressure is written as two numbers such as 120/80 mmHg. The top, or systolic, number is a measure of the pressure of blood against blood vessel walls when the heart beats. The bottom, or diastolic, number is a measure of the pressure when the heart rests between beats. The only way to determine whether you have high blood pressure is to have it checked regularly by a professional.

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Weigh the Consequences continued from previous page...

A HEALTHY DOSE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- If you do not currently participate in physical activity, start slowly and build up over time.
- Choose physical activities that you enjoy or experiment with a new activity such as dancing, swimming or bicycling.
- Increase daily lifestyle activities such as taking the stairs rather than the elevator, parking farther from your destination, and gardening or household chores.

Remember, achieving a healthy weight doesn't happen overnight. The National Institutes of Health recommend being realistic about weight-loss goals and aiming for a slow, modest weight loss.

TO DETERMINE A WEIGHT-LOSS PLAN THAT IS RIGHT FOR YOU, CONSULT YOUR PHYSICIAN.

Know Your Numbers continued from previous page...

CHOLESTEROL

Cholesterol is a soft substance found in the bloodstream and the cells of the body. Some cholesterol is necessary to develop cell membranes, hormones, and serve other bodily functions, however; a high level of cholesterol in the blood may lead to cardiovascular disease. There are two types of cholesterol: high density lipoprotein—or HDL—and low density lipoprotein—or LDL. HDL cholesterol is known as the “good” cholesterol. It travels away from your arteries, which helps protect you from heart disease. Research indicates that high levels of HDL cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart attack. LDL is considered “the bad” cholesterol. When an abundance of LDL cholesterol circulates in the blood, it can gradually build up in the arteries that deliver blood to the heart and brain. Combined with other substances, it can form plaque—a thick substance that can

clog arteries and increase an individual's risk of experiencing heart attack or stroke.

BODY MASS INDEX

Body mass index (BMI) is a measure of an individual's ratio of weight to height. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, BMI provides a reliable indicator of body fatness for most people and is used to screen for weight categories that may lead to health problems. People who are overweight or obese have an increased risk of developing particular diseases and health conditions including hypertension; type 2 diabetes; coronary heart disease; stroke; gallbladder disease; osteoarthritis; sleep apnea and respiratory problems; and some cancers including colon, breast, and endometrial cancers.

GLUCOSE

Once consumed, food turns into glucose, or blood sugar. Diabetes causes levels of blood sugar to rise dangerously high. Over time, an accumulation of glucose in the bloodstream may lead to serious health complications. Some people do not recognize symptoms of diabetes because they do not appear to be harmful. For this reason, it is vital to have blood glucose checked periodically. A blood glucose test can alert an individual that he or she has diabetes or pre-diabetes. Pre-diabetes is a state that occurs before type 2 diabetes, in which a person's blood glucose levels are higher than normal, but not high enough for a diagnosis of diabetes.

METABOLIC SYNDROME

Metabolic syndrome is characterized by simultaneous disorders of the body's metabolism. The components can lead to serious complications including cardiovascular disease, stroke, and diabetes. Research indicates that abdominal obesity and insulin resistance are the primary risk factors for the condition. Metabolic syndrome is identified by the presence of three or more of the following risk factors: abdominal obesity, elevated triglyceride level, reduced HDL, elevated blood pressure, and elevated fasting blood sugar.

For additional information about blood pressure, cholesterol, BMI, glucose, and metabolic syndrome, consult your physician.



St. Luke's Hospital Wellness College Lecture Series

Tuesdays, January 25 through March 1
6 to 8 p.m. • Free

This six-week lecture series provides information on common and preventable diseases, as well as current recommendations for prevention and screening. For a detailed listing or to register for these free lectures, visit www.stlukes-stl.com or call 314-542-4848.

Take a Load Off Your Heart! 109 Things You Can Actually Do to Prevent, Halt & Reverse Heart Disease

Friday, February 18 • 6:30 to 8 p.m.
St. Luke's Institute for Health Education
Free

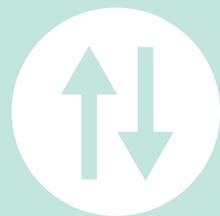
Learn life-changing information on how to prevent, manage and reverse heart disease from author and motivational speaker, Joe Piscatella. Mr. Piscatella, who at 32 years of age underwent bypass surgery, is a frequent guest on national news programs. To register, visit www.stlukesstl.com or call 314-542-4848.

St. Luke's Hospital Day of Dance for Your Health

Saturday, February 26
9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Hilton St. Louis Frontenac

Visit www.stlukes-stl.com for details.



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your NUMBERS?



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