



Waist Loss, Weight Loss, Health Gained

As American we have the dubious distinction of being the most overweight country in the world. Much of this can be attributed to a “toxic” lifestyle we have become accustomed to. We eat too much (super sizing and unlimited buffets) yet we exercise too little (drive thrus and remotes). We worry too much (finances and appearances) yet we relax too little (overscheduling and forfeited vacations).

The net result of all of this is an increase in obesity, diabetes ,hypertension and subsequently heart attacks, strokes and renal failure. We need to make a change! There are a lot of societal changes that can and should be made such as improving food labeling, restricting salts, teaching children and rewarding healthy choices by adults.

However while these societal changes

slowly evolve, each one of us has the ability to make changes within ourselves right now. There are two body measurement that one should be familiar with. The first is BMI (body mass index=your weight in pounds x 703 divided by your height in inches squared) A BMI less than 18.5 is considered underweight, 18.5-25 is ideal, 25-30 is overweight, and greater than 30 is obese. The second measurement is WHR (waist to hip ratio=your waist size at the belly button divided by your hip size at the top of your pelvic bone). Ideal in men is <0.95 and in women <0.80. Ratios greater than 1 significantly increase your risk of cardiovascular disease.

Most of us turn to various diets and supplements. In general these are of limited value and much of the weight loss or inches off the waist will return all too soon. Consequently I don't endorse any but don't dissuade people from trying one as a way of kick starting their efforts. Sustained benefits will only be seen when caloric restriction (decreasing portion sizes and snacks) is coupled with healthy food choices (less carbohydrates, more Mediterranean diet)

and increased energy expenditure (aerobic exercises and sports).

Weight loss drugs are available but all have some side effects, significant expense and only modest benefits. Two new weight loss drugs are being currently evaluated for cardiovascular benefit by our research team (Belviq and Qsymia) . Bariatric surgery is limited to those that are obese. While the three forms of this surgery (banding, gastric bypass and duodenal bypass) all carry increasing levels of risk, they are relatively safe in experienced centers. Unlike drugs and supplements, bariatric surgery has been shown to reverse diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and improve survival.

Many excellent resources are available through my website (www.heartdrsingh.com) or the AHA (www.heart.org) to help you get started on a path to a slimmer and healthier self!

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