



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Slim Down and Shape Up

Vital Signs: State-Specific Obesity Prevalence Among Adults — United States, 2009

Recorded: August 10 2010; posted: August 12, 2010

[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

In the United States, obesity has become both a financial and a health problem. The medical costs associated with obesity are estimated at 147 billion dollars.

Dr. Deborah Galuska is a researcher with CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity. She's joining us today to discuss strategies for overcoming obesity. Welcome to the show, Deb.

[Dr. Galuska] Thanks Bob. It's my pleasure to be here.

[Dr. Gaynes] Deb, how is obesity determined?

[Dr. Galuska] The way we determine obesity is a measure called the body mass index. And this is a measure that accounts for people's height when looking at their weight. Specifically, it takes their weight in kilograms and divides it into their height in meters squared. So a person who has a body mass index of 30 or more is considered obese.

[Dr. Gaynes] What proportion of the U.S. population is considered obese?

[Dr. Galuska] About a third of U.S. adults are considered obese.

[Dr. Gaynes] What kinds of health problems are caused by a person being that overweight?

[Dr. Galuska] So there are a number of serious and costly health problems associated with being overweight, and these include heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers. In addition, people who are overweight or obese tend to have problems with their joints and will suffer from conditions, such as osteoarthritis. We also know that women who are obese tend to have problems with their pregnancies. They may have problems getting pregnant, as well as problems delivering the child.

[Dr. Gaynes] Deb, what's the most effective way for a person to lose weight?

[Dr. Galuska] Bob, we know there are two important things that a person has to do to lose weight. One is to reduce their calories. The second one is to increase their physical activity. In terms of calorie reduction, what people can do is to look at their diet and replace some of the

foods that are high in fats and sugars with foods that are lower in calories, but are more nutritious, such as fruits and vegetables.

With regard to physical activity, people should try to get about two and a half hours of moderate-intensity physical activity each week, but even if they can't get to that goal, they should be at least somewhat active; so something is better than nothing.

[Dr. Gaynes] Is overeating and lack of exercise *always* the cause of obesity?

[Dr. Galuska] Well, we know there's a number of things that contribute to obesity. People's genes, some medications they take, some health conditions, but overeating and lack of physical activity are things people can actually modify and that's what people can work on as they try to lose weight.

[Dr. Gaynes] Deb, where can listeners get more information about losing weight?

[Dr. Galuska] They can get it at our website, at www.cdc.gov/healthyweight, and 'healthyweight' is all one word.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Deb. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Deborah Galuska about ways to overcome obesity.

Remember, replacing foods high in fat or sugar with those lower in calories, such as fruits and vegetables, combined with regular physical activity, is a great first step towards losing weight. If you're experiencing health problems associated with obesity, talk to your healthcare provider and develop a plan to slim down and shape up.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.