

ECHO Q&A

Emergency and Community Health Outreach



Questions & Sample Answers / ECHO-TV “Obesity Special”

(Recording Show: Tuesday, November 23/ 2-7 pm @ TPT)

1. What is obesity?

- Not just “fat”; dangerously overweight, which can hurt your overall health
- More weight than your body can handle for you to function the way you need to
- A medical term that may have negative overtones but nonetheless requires attention and sometimes help from medical experts

2. What does being overweight mean in your culture?

- Could mean rich vs. poor. Some cultures define class status based on people’s size.
- It could relate to eating things every day that are not good for you.
- It could relate to not getting enough physical activity throughout the day.

3. What are common side effects to being overweight?

- Diabetes, a disease that can result in many other medical complications
- Blood circulation diseases like arteriosclerosis, high blood pressure, heart disease
- Joint problems, such as back, knee and ankle pain
- Certain types of cancer
- Pregnancy complications
- Low self-esteem
- Low energy levels, so you can’t play actively with your kids for very long

4. What can you do about obesity?

- Cut down on unnecessary fat and calories for healthier eating
- Be physically active to burn calories and keep weight down
- Get help to change unhealthy behaviors and create good habits for the future.
- Be aware that some systems might make this challenging; there might be unhealthy foods in school cafeterias or a lack of sidewalks in your neighborhood, for example.

- Talk to others in your community about what we can all do together to change these systems.

5. What are some simple positive lifestyle changes you can make?

- Eat more fruits and vegetables.
- Walk whenever possible.
- Try to be more active in general.

6. What foods should you eat more of?

- Vegetables, which provide essential vitamins, minerals and nutrients that keep you healthy. Vegetables are also a great source of fiber which your body needs to keep your digestive system working properly. They are also low in calories.
- Fruits, which provide many essential minerals and nutrients while lowering your risk of many common diseases and health problems. They are also low in calories.
- Grains, esp. whole grains—like corn tortillas instead of flour tortillas, and brown rice instead of white rice
- Legumes and beans
- Nuts
- Eggs, low-fat dairy

7. What foods should you avoid to prevent obesity?

- “Fast foods”—the ones you order at a pick-up window
- Heavily processed foods, like lots of microwave meals
- Foods high in added sugar or added fats

8. How about drinks? Are sports drinks as good as they claim to be?

- Some sports drinks are packed with unnecessary sugars and calories
- Water is the best choice for hydration, which bodies need to be healthy

9. If you're overweight, what can you do?

(Are some of the ‘fad’ diets [Atkins, South Beach, etc.] safe and effective?)

- The best approach is healthier eating to reduce calories and being physically active
- Fad diets often aren't balanced and can give a false sense of health. They also don't tend to have lasting effects.
- It's best to check with a doctor first about a proper diet to meet your weight loss and health needs.
- For cultures not familiar with fad diets: These are the types of diets you see advertised on TV for a quick way to lose weight.

10. How can maintaining a healthy lifestyle save on medical bills?

- Fewer trips to the doctor because you are practicing good health
- Fewer weight-related illnesses
- Less time missed from work – more stable job can mean better health insurance

11. Why is being active so important?

- Helps improve your mood and your overall outlook on life
- Helps with your overall fitness, which has many benefits
- Helps keep you from becoming obese
- Sets a good example for your children/family and gives you more energy to play with your kids

12. Does being active have to mean working out?

- It can, but does not have to. It means moving more and sitting less.
- Could be as simple as taking the steps instead of the elevator and walking or biking instead of taking the car for short trips
- Could be a hobby such as gardening

13. How hard should you exercise?

- Do activities you enjoy that get your heart pumping.
- Exercise at a level where your heart is beating fast but you are just able to hold a conversation.
- Try to be active at least 30 minutes most days.

14. What are some physical bonuses to exercising in particular?

- Improves your mood
- Helps prevent chronic diseases
- Helps you manage your weight
- Increases energy level
- Promotes better sleep

15. What are some short-term benefits to being fit?

- A healthier heart
- Healthy muscles, bones, and joints
- Increased burning of calories
- Better ability to cope with stress
- Increased energy

- Sharper and faster thinking

16. What are some long-term benefits to being fit?

Reduced risk of:

- Dying early
- Heart disease or blood circulation diseases
- Developing high blood pressure
- Developing type 2 diabetes

17. Where can you go for more information about proper diet and exercise?

- Your doctor's office
- Public health agencies
- Fitness facilities
- Your child's school
- Some community centers that are free and may offer resources