

# RJ Ahmann Company Prevention Newsletter



*...for the health and well-being of you and your family.*

*Obesity has reached epidemic proportions globally, with more than 1 billion adults overweight, and at least 300 million of them clinically obese. It is a major contributor to chronic disease and disability.*

*Why is obesity considered an epidemic? There are many reasons, including the fact that Americans are eating more energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods with high levels of sugar and saturated fats. Society's fast-paced mindset encourages eating food on the go, and the family dinner table is all but obsolete.*

*Don't become part of the epidemic. Learn how to manage your weight effectively and live the healthiest lifestyle possible!*

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## **The Obesity Epidemic**

Being overweight or obese poses a major risk for serious diet-related chronic and life-threatening diseases, including Type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, high blood pressure and high cholesterol, stroke, gallbladder disease, cancer, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea and respiratory problems, and reproductive complications.

### **What Counts as Obese?**

Weight is commonly assessed by using Body Mass Index, or BMI, defined as the weight in kilograms divided by the square of the height in meters (kg/m<sup>2</sup>). A BMI over 25 kg/m<sup>2</sup> is defined as overweight, and a BMI of 30 or more is considered obese. Go to [www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi](http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi) to figure out yours.

### **Living a Healthier Lifestyle**

It's easier than you think to start implementing healthy choices into your life. Little changes can go a long way:

- Substitute water for one sugary drink every day.
- Add 1 to 2 more fruits or vegetables to your meals each day.
- Plan a healthy snack for every day of the week.
- Switch to a low-fat version of your favorite food.
- Eat breakfast! It keeps you from overeating throughout the rest of the day.
- Watch your portion sizes! A serving of meat should be no more than the size of a deck of cards, and one serving of pasta or rice is only half a cup.
- Stop eating when you feel full.
- Be conscious of what you are consuming. Read the labels on food you purchase and know the serving size.
- Stay away from trans fat, a formerly healthy fat which has been chemically processed into an unhealthy fat. Even something labeled "low-fat" may still contain trans fat.

*Read food  
labels for  
ingredients  
and pay  
attention to  
serving  
size!*



## Try New Things!

To lose weight, you must eat fewer calories than your body uses. This doesn't necessarily mean you have to eat less food. You can create lower-calorie versions of your favorite dishes by substituting fruits and vegetables in place of higher-calorie ingredients. The water and fiber in fruits and vegetables will add volume to your dishes, so you can eat the same amount of food with fewer calories – yet feel just as full. Here are some examples:

- Cut back on the amount of cereal in your breakfast bowl to make room for cut-up bananas, strawberries, or peaches.
- Substitute spinach, onions, or mushrooms for one of the eggs or half the cheese you would have in an omelet.
- Exchange 2 ounces of cheese or 2 ounces of meat in your sandwich for extra lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, or onions.
- Add one cup of chopped vegetables and remove 1 cup of pasta or rice from your entrée.
- Try hummus and whole-wheat pitas or baked tortilla chips with salsa instead of potato chips and dip as a snack.
- Store cleaned, cut up vegetables in the fridge at eye level and keep a low-fat or fat-free dip on hand.

## Tips for Eating Out

Yes, you can still eat at your favorite restaurant, provided you make some different choices:

- Ask for sauces, gravy and dressings on the side – or avoid them altogether. Try a squeeze of lemon instead of dressing or ketchup instead of barbecue sauce.
- Order foods that are not breaded or fried.
- Drink water, low-fat or nonfat milk, or diet soda.
- Ask for substitutions – a vegetable instead of fries, or for the high-fat food to be left off your plate.
- Order fruit for an appetizer or as a dessert.
- Choose broth-based soups rather than cream-based.
- If offered, choose the “lunch” or “kids” portion over the “dinner” portion.
- Avoid buffets – not only are they normally stocked with unhealthy choices, it can be hard to stop yourself from overeating.
- Immediately ask that half your meal be wrapped to go – most restaurants serve portions double or even triple the size of what you should be consuming.

## Dread Exercising?

Don't! There are many ways you can incorporate fitness into your daily routine:

- Park your car in an area that forces you to walk a significant distance to and from your destination.
- Take dance lessons!
- Instead of rewarding your kids with food, involve the family in activity such as a game of Frisbee or rollerblading.
- Ride your bike to do errands on pleasant days.
- Walk your dog 1 block further than usual every week.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator – this includes at work!

Even a weight loss of 5% to 15% of your total body weight dramatically decreases your risk of weight-related diseases, so start your healthy life today!