

WHAT TO DO ABOUT OVERWEIGHT

40 million Americans and 10 million Britons are plagued with excess weight. Are you one of them? Here's what you can do about it.

by Isabell F. Hoeh

HEALTH AUTHORITIES estimate one in five people in Canada, Britain, Australia, and the United States is *obese*! If you include those who are just slightly overweight or who habitually overeat, the number soars to 80 million in the United States alone.

Doctors declare that excess pounds predispose the individual to heart disease, diabetes, and diseases of the circulatory system. Insurance companies warn that the life expectancy of the person thus burdened is greatly diminished.

As a result of this publicity many have become alarmed.

Immediately drug companies, food corporations, vitamin manufacturers, dieticians, magazine columnists and even your next-door neighbors are ready with solutions of all types. Flooded by advice of every description, some agreeing, some conflicting, those concerned have reason to become confused.

Diets of all kinds, vitamin candy, drugs, exercises and various other remedies have been invented, each claiming to make losing weight easy. While any one of these may work for some, countless others become discouraged when they lose weight only to regain it when they resume customary eating habits. And some of these suffer impaired health because of the drastic measures used.

The Cause of Overweight

What is the cause of this national problem of overweight?

Basically, the answer is simple: *overeating*, particularly of the high-calorie foods. This includes ice cream, pies, sodas, cakes, fried foods, gravies, and

too much bread. Potatoes have often been accused of causing excessive weight, but few eat enough of this unglamorous food that it alone could cause the gross overweight often seen.

Superfluous weight does not appear overnight. Occasional overindulgence at a heavily laden holiday table does *not* cause it — it is the *little everyday habits* such as bread with every meal, rich desserts and gravies, daily candy snacks, and the American "coffee break" or the British "tea break", both of which usually include cream, sugar, and a high-caloried confection. All these treats add imperceptible ounces that gradually add up to pounds!

"But why can some people do these things and never become overweight?" you may ask. This may be due to several factors. Overweight is *not* only the result of *how much* you eat, but also it is how much you eat **IN PROPORTION TO HOW MUCH YOU BURN UP IN PHYSICAL AND MENTAL ACTIVITIES**. This *metabolism rate* is different for each person.

A tall or a larger built person will naturally require more energy to keep him at a given level than a small person will. Also, the person who is very active, who does hard physical work or participates in sports, may consume more food without any obvious effects because it is burned up by physical exertion.

Some persons have glandular arrangements which cause their bodies to use more fuel to function even while at rest.

Emotional Aspects of Overweight

Overeating may be a symptom of various maladjustments. The person

who is troubled, bored or emotionally upset may seek comfort or satisfaction by indulging in food just as another person thus disturbed may indulge in alcohol.

Others may overeat because they have acquired a wrong sense of values. To them, eating is one of the basic enjoyments of life and they intend to enjoy it to the full. Denying themselves anything that pleases the palate is a hardship. Such people need to develop interests in other fields and to learn that non-fattening foods can be just as enjoyable as the fattening ones.

Then again you hear some say that plumpness is an inherited characteristic natural to their family. If they would analyze their diet patterns, they would find that *it is the family's food preferences*, not inherited tendencies alone, which are responsible for their overweight.

Aside from these factors, however, it is a truth that a large proportion of overweight persons were simply not taught what to eat as children. Their parents were not aware of what a good diet should consist of; or if they were, they never considered adherence to it vital. In many households, the mother cooks the foods which her family appreciates the most, and too often those are the *desserts* or other rich foods. If the mother does venture to guide her family's eating habits, the father is often uncooperative, stating flatly that he will "eat what he pleases when he pleases." And children are often inclined to imitate the more outspoken or aggressive parent.

Evidently, then, one of the first things that the would-be reducer must

do is discover the cause of his trouble and be *willing* to change his present attitude and habits. Overweight is generally *the result of years of practicing insidious bad habits*. It cannot safely be overcome in a matter of days. There is no "quick" way to reduce. In his book *Outwit Your Appetite*, J. W. D. Grant states that you must "convince yourself that it is really worth while for you to reduce, that the time has come when you should reduce, because your attitude of mind toward reducing will determine whether you are going to reduce the easy way, or the hard, disagreeable way."

Put foremost in your mind the health benefits that you will realize from attaining a normal weight. Think how much better you will feel, how much more useful energy you will have, how much easier it will be to do your daily work. "Think of your program, not as a reducing diet, but as a regime which builds health and solves the weight problem for a lifetime." (From Gayelord Hauser's *Diet Does It*.)

Figuring Your Requirements

The aim of the overweight individual must be to adjust his diet to include less calories than his body actually uses so that it will draw on its own stored fat. In order to reduce, *you must take about one third fewer calories than your requirement*. How do you know what your requirement is? It is best found by multiplying what your accepted normal weight should be (as shown by height-and-weight charts), by the number of calories needed per pound.

A woman five feet, four inches tall with a medium frame should weigh 125 to 130 pounds. If she does *only housework*, her energy requirement would be not more than 16 calories per pound or 2000 to 2100 calories daily. About 3500 calories are needed to make a pound of body fat. If she were to eat a diet yielding 1200 to 1300 calories per day, she would use 800 calories of body fat per day, thus losing a pound of weight every four or five days.

Surprisingly enough, *housework is in the same category with office work*. It is estimated that a woman doing ironing and a girl doing the fastest typing expend the same amount of

energy. Fairly active exercise, such as outdoor farm work, calls for 18 to 20 calories per pound of body weight.

Many charts also include age as a factor, but there is no reason why one in good health should weigh more at fifty than at twenty-five. The basic body frame — the skeleton — does not increase in size. Any additional weight acquired as one ages is only fat, unless it is additional muscle acquired through strenuous exercise.

But while technical figures involving calories are interesting, their usefulness to the prospective reducer lies in the fact that a knowledge of them provides a criterion by which *a basic menu can be outlined*. To meticulously plan every menu according to its exact caloric content is *burdensome and unnecessary*.

Points to Consider

The diet must include everything essential for efficient body functioning, yet yield a minimum of calories. Foods should not be eliminated merely because they contain calories. The total elements which they contain must be considered. For example, one medium egg contains as many calories as one large head of lettuce, yet the egg must not be omitted for it is a source of complete protein, iron and vitamin A, all necessary to health.

The menu should provide for plenty of protein. This is necessary to maintain muscle structure, thus keeping the body firm. Since most of the vegetable foods known to be high in protein are also relatively high in starch, this requirement should be supplied by milk, yogurt, lean meat, fish, fowl and eggs. Cheese is good, but it is rich in butterfat and can best be eaten in place of butter occasionally. A 100-calorie piece of cheese is larger than a 100-calorie piece of butter and yields calcium, protein and phosphorus besides. A one-inch cube of cheddar cheese contains the same calories as one tablespoonful of butter.

Vegetables — raw, or quick-cooked, or made into juice — *should provide a large portion of the diet*. Most of them are high in minerals and vitamins, low in starches and sugars. Exceptions to this, to be used sparingly, are parsnips, winter squashes, rutabagas, oysterplant,

green lima beans, green peas and celery root. They contain ten to fifteen percent starch and sugars.

All kinds of dried beans, corn, sweet potatoes, white potatoes and yams consist of 20 percent starch or more, and should likewise be seldom eaten while observing a reducing diet. When they are eaten, **LEAVE OFF THE DESSERT OR OMIT THE BREAD IN THE MENU**.

Use the green and yellow vegetables liberally as they are rich sources of protective elements. Begin lunch and dinner (or supper) with a vegetable salad seasoned with a very light dressing, or lemon juice and a little salt. This way you are sure of getting the essentials first, and it is filling! Many fine restaurants follow this practice.

If you make fresh vegetable juices to drink, make only as much as you can drink at one time. This way you get the benefit of their vitamin C. Tomato juice is the exception, but whatever remains over should be tightly covered and kept refrigerated. Use fresh red and green peppers liberally as they contain more vitamin C than even most fruits.

Are Fruits Important?

The importance of fruits, and especially fruit juices, in the weight reduction program *has been overestimated*. One large apple, one medium banana or one large bunch of grapes, for example, yield 100 calories each, whereas the same quantity of most fresh vegetables will seldom yield over fifty! Fruits are rich in sugar, or if underripe, starch. If eaten liberally, *they can maintain weight that you are in need of removing*.

In general, it is better to eat the *whole* fruit rather than just the juice. Whole fruits demand chewing which automatically mixes them with the sugar-digesting saliva. The pulp of the fresh fruit also furnishes bulk, so necessary for a feeling of satisfaction and for elimination.

Dried fruits should not be used at all except for a few chopped bits in salads since they average 75 percent natural sugars.

Breads and Cereals

Whatever bread or cereals are used should be whole-grain. A small dish of

cracked wheat cereal, cooked whole wheat, or oatmeal for breakfast furnishes important B vitamins and protein to supplement that of the egg. When cereal is eaten, the bread for that meal should be omitted.

Pies, cakes and cookies, even though made of whole grain flour, *should be eliminated* because they contain large amounts of fat and sugar.

The Place of Fats and Sugars

The simplest way to exclude fattening calories from the daily menu is to cut out the fats. An ounce of fat (about 4 teaspoonfuls) contains 255 calories, over twice as much as an ounce of either carbohydrate (sugars and starch) or protein. However, *some fats are necessary* to supply essential fatty acids and vitamin A. These are found in the liquid salad oils and in butter and cream. *Hydrogenated fats yield only calories and should be entirely omitted.* Make your own salad dressings and use them sparingly on your salads.

Raw sugar and honey possess greater satisfaction value than white sugar and should be used judiciously in the salad dressings and on cereals. Unsweetened canned fruits may be lightly sweetened with warmed honey. Charts disagree as to the energy value of honey. Some say that one tablespoon of honey yields 75 calories, some say 100. But, in any case, use it and sugar frugally. Don't overdo!

Remember to chew all starchy and sweet foods well so that they will cause no trouble in the stomach. Fermentation and painful gas result when the initial step of their digestion is not attended to in the mouth.

Perhaps you are wondering if it would be wise to use artificial sweeteners or artificially sweetened foods containing saccharin and the like? This is unwise and may in fact prove *dangerous* — witness the ban on cyclamate sweeteners in the United States and other countries. The safety of most food additives in reality has not as yet been determined.

Constructing the Menu

Having considered what an adequate menu must include, we are ready to make a general outline.

Breakfast:

- 1 whole fruit or a glass of tomato juice (if grapefruit, use one-half large)
- 1 egg, cooked any way except fried
- 1 slice whole wheat bread *or* a small dish of whole-grain cereal
- 1 cup skim or whole milk.

Lunch:

Vegetable, or vegetable and fruit salad dressed with lemon juice and dash of salt, *or* a teaspoon or two of dressing

- 1 serving of cottage cheese, or fish, or beef or lamb liver
- 1 slice of whole wheat bread permissible on occasions
- 1 glass of yogurt or milk.

Dinner (or Supper):

- 1 tossed green salad
- 1 serving of meat, or fish or poultry *or* a soufflé or omelet made with eggs
- 1 serving of a cooked vegetable with lemon juice and a small pat of butter
- 1 slice of bread, if required
- 1 dish unsweetened fruit, a custard or other light dessert.

Instead of dessert, you may substitute one glass of whole milk.

Sometimes, instead of the bread and dessert, have a baked potato or a potato cooked in the jacket with a pat of butter or a spoonful or sour cream. If mayonnaise or dressing is used on the salads, such a menu will furnish about 1300 calories per day, allowing a loss of one and one half to two pounds of weight per week.

You should drink sufficient water *but not at mealtime*. This dilutes gastric juices and prolongs digestion. Some advise drinking six glasses of water a day, but this is *too much* for most seasons. Besides, it depends on the activities you engage in. It is best to drink as much as you feel you need. Salads and juices supply considerable moisture so that you may not experience much thirst.

Upon arising every morning it is a good practice to squeeze the juice of half a lemon into a glass of cool water

and drink it, not because lemon juice dissolves fat, as some believe, but because it aids elimination.

How Fast to Lose

Weight should always be lost *gradually*. This enables the body to become readjusted without shock to vital organs. *A loss of one pound per week is fast enough* for a person of middle age or older. The first week you may lose three to five pounds — this initial loss being mostly of liquid.

"Miracle" plans that promise average losses of five to ten pounds a week should always be regarded with suspicion. Younger people may safely lose two or three pounds each week.

Dinitrophenol, benzedrine and dexedrine are dangerous drugs and should *never* be considered! Laxative salts should *never* be used because, besides being irritating, they carry away valuable elements of the blood and lymph.

And here is something else to remember:

"Of all the reducing cures, the most hazardous are the metabolic stimulants. *Less than 5 percent of obesity is due to glandular deficiency* so don't assume that you can blame the whole thing on your glands." (From *Prescription for Slimming* by Ida J. Kain.)

Food Fables

The idea that there are certain foods that you can eat which will "dissolve" body fat is fallacious. Grapefruit, lemons, grapes, or grapefruit juice are excellent to include in a reducing diet or any other diet, but they have no inherent reducing ability. A cup of canned grapefruit juice yields 100 calories, a cup of lemon juice, 80, and a cup of grape juice 120 to 160 calories. A cup of whole milk yields about 160 calories and in addition furnishes calcium, phosphorus, protein and vitamins.

It isn't what you eat that causes you to lose — *it's what you don't eat!*

Liquid diets, raw-food diets or elimination diets may help some people to reduce their capacity and thus help them to follow a regular reducing program later, **BUT THEY ARE LIKELY TO BE UPSETTING AND TOO RADICAL IN**

EFFECT. In order for the body to function normally, the diet should provide natural bulk as all foods in their natural state do.

Should One Exercise?

Nearly every reducing program should include specific exercises. These are intended to tone up the muscles and skin so that wrinkling will be prevented. However, they do not need to be strenuous, but merely of a stretching nature. People middle-aged or over who have 30 to 40 pounds to lose should wait with exercising until at least half of the fat burden has been lost. Massage helps to tone up the tissues and promote circulation, but by itself it cannot "melt away" pounds.

Alcoholic Beverages

Another item to take into account when formulating a reducing plan is alcoholic beverages. There are more calories in them than you would think! Let us consider a few figures: Whiskies and highballs yield 110 to 125 calories per jigger; beer, 100 per 7-ounce glass; cocktails, 130 to 160 per 3-ounce glass; sweet wines, 120 to 150 calories each 3-ounce glass; dry wines, 70 per 3-ounce glass; most cordials, 105 to 110 calories per 1-ounce cordial glass, and dry and sweet champagne, 110 to 155 calories per 4½-ounce champagne glass.

If you are having wine or another drink with your meal, leave off the dessert!

Recipes

Since salads play a prominent role in the menus, it will be helpful to have several good dressings to make them more palatable. You will find these good enough to use any time, reducing or not.

LOW-CALORIE FRENCH DRESSING

- 1 teaspoon plain all-beef gelatine
- 1 tablespoon cold water
- ¼ cup hot water
- 3 tablespoons raw sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup fresh lemon juice
- dash of pepper
- ⅛ teaspoon dry mustard
- 1 teaspoon chopped chives or onion
- ½ clove garlic, minced (optional)

Soften gelatine in cold water. Add hot water and stir to dissolve gelatine. Add sugar and salt, then cool.

Combine lemon juice, pepper, garlic, dry mustard and chives. Add to gelatine and shake well. Use at room temperature.

It may be covered and stored in the refrigerator, but must be left at room temperature for at least one hour before serving to dissolve. This process can be hastened by placing the jar containing the dressing in warm water. Makes one cup of dressing. One tablespoon contains 19 calories.

In the following recipe oil is used, but the dressing is so tangy that not much is required.

HERBED FRENCH DRESSING

- 2 tablespoons raw or brown sugar
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 1 tablespoon powdered dry mustard
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 tablespoon minced onion
- ¾ teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon ground dill seed
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon garlic salt or 1 small clove garlic, minced
- ½ cup olive oil
- ½ cup salad oil

- ¼ cup canned tomato sauce
- ⅓ cup wine vinegar
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Combine the sugar, salt and spices. Add the oils and let stand one or more hours at room temperature. Add the tomato sauce, vinegar and lemon juice. Shake well. Chill and serve over mixed salad greens. Makes about 1⅔ cups of dressing. This does not separate appreciably on standing.

You will need a pepper mill to grind the dill seeds.

A simple and nutritious dressing for fruit salads may be made as follows:

BANANA DRESSING

- 2 very ripe bananas
- 2 tablespoons sweet cream
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

Place the peeled bananas in a bowl and sprinkle the lemon juice over them. Mash them with a spoon and add the cream and honey. Mix well and let stand about 15 minutes at room temperature before using.

If you enjoy cheese, here is a recipe:

GRATED CHEESE DRESSING

- 4 tablespoons salad oil
- ½ teaspoon vegetized salt
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- ¾ cup grated cheddar cheese (avoid processed cheeses)
- 1 tablespoon chopped pimiento

Mix ingredients by shaking together in a glass jar. Store in refrigerator. Shake well before using.

If you follow the material in this article, you WILL SOLVE your overweight problems! □