

UNION GENERAL WELLNESS

CENTER NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4



Financial Costs of Obesity

Two-thirds of American adults are either obese or overweight. As time has gone on, the healthier foods have increased their prices making the unhealthy inexpensive foods the chosen alternative. High calorie diets that lead to obesity raise the risk of heart disease, diabetes, some cancers, arthritis, and various other ailments. Obesity was responsible for 9.1% of annual medical costs in 2008. The medical costs for an obese person are 42% more than someone of average weight. But poor health isn't the only way Americans pay for all that extra weight, there's also a

hefty financial price attached. Here are the top four costs associated with obesity:

1) **Lower wages:** Employers tend to pay obese workers less when they're footing the bill for their insurance, researchers said, speculating that it could be an unconscious reaction on the part of the employer to having to pay higher premiums for a more obese workforce.

2) **Fewer work hours:** On average, obese workers tend to lose a week of work a year due to ailments related to their weight

3) **Extra air travel costs:** Budget airlines such as Southwest require obese people or people who may take up more than one seat to buy an adequate number of seats on the flight.

4) **More gasoline:** Obviously, more weight burns more gasoline in cars, too. A 2006 study published in the journal *The Engineering Economist* found that Americans pumped 938 million more gallons of fuel a year than they did in 1960 because of their heftier frames. That adds up to roughly \$3.55 billion in increased annual gas expenditures nationwide.

Obesity is more expensive for women

Economists at George Washington University have tabulated the cost of obesity and discovered a surprising gender gap: It's more expensive for a woman to be obese than a man. While a man racks up \$2646 annually in extra expenses if he is obese, a

woman's obesity costs her \$4879, almost twice as much. Much of the gender gap is due to lower wages for obese women, who earn less relative to similar working women who are not obese, according to the analysis. The study also found that the more over-

weight you are, the more expensive life gets. The incremental costs faced by obese women are nine times higher than those for overweight women. For obese men, the costs are six times higher than those of overweight men.



HOW TO AVOID WEIGHT GAIN IN THE WINTER

It is very important to watch weight gain in winter months. When it is cold and dreary outside, it is so easy to get sedentary and gain weight. So, if you feel such tendency to gain weight in winter, here are few ways to avoid weight gain in winter.

Practice portion control and eat slowly

By eating small amounts and slowly, you can give your

body time to send a signal to your mind that you are no longer hungry; as a result, you can stop eating more than required.

Prefer salads

Eat salad in your lunch or dinner to keep you from over-eating. It usually curbs your body appetite and gives you sense of feeling full sooner.

Practice weight loss workouts regularly

Even though it is hard to exercise in winter months, it is very essential for you to work-out every day, particularly in winter months to avoid weight gain.

Avoid excess sugar

Stay away from excess sugar like candy and cookies. This is very important to avoid weight gain in winter months.

PREPARING FOR COLD AND FLU SEASON

Studies show that the average person contracts about three colds per year, and those who are in contact with young children get even more. While there's no cure for the common cold or the flu, you can take these measures to protect yourself:

-Know the difference between a cold and the flu. A cold can last two or three weeks; most people are bet-

ter within seven to ten days. On the other hand, without proper care or attention, a flu virus can lead to bronchitis or pneumonia, each of which can cause permanent health damage. *-Wash your hands.* Frequent washing with warm water and ordinary soap for 10 seconds is one of the simplest and most effective ways to avoid catching a cold or the flu.

-Disinfect your home regularly. Spray the surfaces in your bathroom and kitchen with a mild solution of 2 to 5 percent bleach in water to kill viruses and bacteria.

-Eat a well-balanced diet. It's essential to building a healthy immune system, and it provides sources of energy and nutrition for optimal growth and development.

- Get a flu vaccine

TIPS TO SURVIVE HOLIDAY GATHERINGS

To help everyone fit into their clothes after all the stuffing, turkey, pies and buttery side dishes, try the following tips:

1. Work out before the big feast, family gathering or holiday party
- 2 Fill up on veggies before

even thinking about looking at the dessert table

3. Eat a salad or some healthy food before going to a party or gathering and drink plenty of water ahead of time
4. When drinking alcohol, drink a glass of water after every alcoholic beverage

5. If you lose all self-control at the site of chocolate or other sweet favorites, eat a lighter meal to cut at least some calories before attacking the dessert table