
Weighing In October 2016

All Men and Women are Created Equal..... Unless You're Fat!

Recently I had a young female patient come to our office after she had completed a tour of the United States. She is a physician that is well thought of in her field of expertise. She has published many articles and has authored chapters in medical books. While she was touring around the country she noted that as her own weight slowly increased and then became more dramatic, questions from the audience began declining following her presentation. This really stung as she knew this was all due to her increased size. She then decided to do a little research on how people view the obese. From this she concluded that all people are created equal---until they become fat.

I told her I agree with her one hundred percent. It seems that in our society today obese people are held in a negative light. They are many times thought to be lazy or lacking in intelligence or in self-discipline. Nothing could be further from the truth!

Weight discrimination has increased 66% in the last decade. Today a whopping two-thirds of the American population is considered obese. And when polled 62% of Americans said they saw no harm in making of negative comments about an obese person's weight. Obesity is the last bastion of bias and discrimination. There are laws throughout that protect us from discrimination based on our race, religion or sexual orientation, but there still exists a bias against the obese person. I've heard stories about the employer who didn't want to hire obese people or the landlord that didn't want to rent to people that are obese. And there is no legal recourse.

In a recent article, more than 75% of obese people reported being ridiculed from their family members. Children as young as 4 or 5 are reluctant to make friends with an obese child or a child that's overweight. This stigma of obesity hurts emotionally and psychologically and increases the risk for depression and anxiety. The dissatisfaction with their body image contributes to low self-esteem which in turn causes more problems with obesity itself.

Recent research reveals that weight discrimination is seen in all directions of life. An article in Psychology Today magazine reported that patients felt judged by their physicians before they even talked with them. They recognized a certain expression that conveyed disgust with them due to their obesity. More than half the physicians polled concurred that they held a certain bias against their overweight patients. The physicians stated they actually wanted them out of their office as fast as possible because they did not represent good health. They felt that they created a negative image for their practice.

The obesity epidemic can partially be explained by people's responses to changes in their environmental atmosphere. For example we have seen a reduction in the need for manual labor over the last few years. At the same time, we've seen a dramatic increase of fast food restaurants and the accessibility to carbohydrate-laden processed foods which are all heavily advertised. Notice how newer neighborhoods don't provide sidewalks anymore which used to encourage people to walk? And speaking of which, just how many people would still feel safe walking outside their homes these days? So how do we correct this problem of the judging obese people rather than focusing on helping them take personal responsibility? The answer is through education. First the obese person must learn how to eat as well as what to eat. Many of you suffer from insulin resistance, carbohydrate intolerance, diabetes mellitus type II, and hypothyroidism. Some of you have other metabolic issues which make it difficult for you to lose weight. However, if you accept what we teach and put it into practice we can make your weight loss journey very doable.

So the next time you're in the grocery store and you see the very large person pushing the shopping cart, please remember that you were once that person. Say a little prayer for them that God will give them wisdom on how to eat. Maybe he will even give you an opportunity to speak into their life offering a word of encouragement. We must learn to not judge people by appearance. Every one of us that walks the face of this earth is important to our loving God. The Bible says God knew us before we were created within our mother's womb. And he designed us to help, not judge, one another.

On your next visit when you find yourself sitting in our waiting room, please try to be an encourager to the person next to you. You could make all the difference in his journey away from obesity.

Blessings,
Chuck Shaffer, MD

Chicken Bok Choy Stir Fry

Ingredients

- 3 boneless and skinless chicken breasts
- 2 egg yolks
- Low sugar soy sauce
- 1 bunch bok choy
- 1 cup mushrooms, sliced
- 1-2 teaspoons minced garlic
- sesame oil
- salt and pepper

Directions

1. Cut the chicken into thin slices.
 2. Mix 1 teaspoon soy sauce, egg yolks and coconut flour. Coat chicken with egg yolk mixture and let sit.
 3. Slice bok choy into small bite size pieces.
 4. Heat sesame oil in large skillet or wok. Cook garlic in oil until golden.
 5. Add chicken to skillet and stir fry until no longer pink.
 6. Stir in mushrooms and bok choy. Continue to cook and stir until vegetables are tender.
- Add additional soy sauce, salt and pepper to taste.



Gut bacteria and your weight

We often don't think about bacteria living in our bodies but the fact of the matter is we couldn't live without them! Deep inside our colons are billions of bacteria that aid in the fermentation of foods and a healthy GI tract. Now, emerging research is now linking the type of bacteria in our gut to obesity risk.

A recent study examined gut microbiota and weight in 84 children and teenagers who were between 7 and 20 years old. The participants included 27 youth who were obese, 35 who were severely obese, seven who were overweight and 15 who were normal weight. Researchers evaluated the participants' gut microbiota, had MRI scans done on each participant to measure body fat partitioning and took blood samples. Participants also kept a three-day food diary.

The investigators found eight groups of gut microbiota that were connected to the amount of fat in the body. They found that in children and teens with obesity, four of the microbial communities tended to flourish in comparison to their normal-weight peers. Smaller amounts of the other four microbial groups were also present in participants who were obese but were not found in children and teenagers of normal weight. The gut bacteria found in youth who were obese appeared to be more efficient at digesting carbohydrates than the gut flora of teenagers and children of normal weight. In addition, the children with obesity tended to have higher levels of short chain fatty acids in the blood compared to children of normal weight. Investigators found short chain fatty acids are associated with the production of fat in the liver. These short chain fatty acids are produced by the 8 types of bacteria found in the gut flora of these individuals.

This research suggests that depending on your gut microbial, there may be more short chain fatty acids produced and then converted to fat within the liver and then accumulate in the fat tissue. Probiotics are a good form of bacteria and are recommended for overall health. In addition, they may help balance your gut microbiota resulting in a decrease in number of flora that are detrimental to health. All though more research is needed, starting with a probiotic regime can't hurt.

Journal Reference:

Nicola Santoro et al. **Role of Gut Microbiota and Short Chain Fatty Acids in Modulating Energy Harvest and Fat Partitioning in Youth - See more at: <http://press.endocrine.org/doi/10.1210/jc.2016-1797#sthash.xXtio5KA.dpuf>**. *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*, September 2016 DOI: [10.1210/jcem.2016-1797](https://doi.org/10.1210/jcem.2016-1797)