

5. Health and Lifestyle Feature – Problems and Solutions

Each newsletter can feature a condition, illness or challenge for the company. For example, **Obesity**. We talk about why it happens, choices in treatment and tips, and resources for help. We do this for cancer, hypertension, insomnia, stress, depression, and a range of other topics.

OBESITY AND STRESS

DID YOU KNOW?

- **2 OUT OF 3 Americans are overweight**
- **The Surgeon General was asked what the most pressing issue facing America today is. He immediately answered, “OBESITY”**
- **The leading cause of preventable death is OBESITY**
- **OBESITY costs us \$120 billion a year**
- **Diet plans from diet gurus have a 93-97% failure rate**

MENTAL DISORDERS. Obese individuals are more prone to anxiety, depression, fatigue and irritability.

PHYSICAL DISEASES AND CONDITIONS. Being overweight increases the likelihood of suffering from major diseases such as heart disease, cancer, hypertension, diabetes, arthritis and many other bone and joint ailments. Two-thirds of U.S. adults are overweight, and about half of those are obese.

MEDICAL COSTS. Obesity and the long-term medical costs of being overweight are greater than our country can bear. Americans spend \$117 billion a year on obesity-linked illnesses.

LEADING CAUSE OF PREVENTIBLE DEATH. The *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported that poor diet and physical inactivity will soon pass tobacco as the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S.

STRESS CAUSES OBESITY AND WEIGHT GAIN. Contrary to a popular notion that a stressful life results in a loss of appetite and weight loss, stress causes the body to conserve fat and expend fewer calories. The best approach is to first look for ways you can find to reduce stress. When there is unavoidable stress, find ways to deal with it that do not lead you to food. The more you eat, the more stressed you feel, and it becomes a frustrating spiral downward. Harvard estimates that 90% of our doctor visits are stress-related.

THE RISE OF MIDLIFE EATING PROBLEMS. Coping with menopause, empty nest, your aging marriage, caring for aging parents, career pressures, society’s emphasis on beauty and youth are causes of midlife eating problems. Women find they are eating to calm them, manage anxiety and ease depression.

INSOMNIA. Studies show that a lack of sleep leads to lower levels of the hormone LEPTIN, which causes an increase in appetite. Tired people turn to food to replenish their energy.

Health and Lifestyle Feature – Problems and Solutions (continued)

Interesting Facts About Obesity:

- There are three types of eating: night eating, binge eating, and eating without satiation.
- We eat to diminish anxiety, relieve stress, sedate ourselves, and cope with emotions such as anger, depression, and anxiety.
- In numerous studies in which obese individuals were interviewed and asked if they ate more when stressed, seventy-five percent of them reported increased eating when stressed.
- Obese individuals regain a sense of control when they eat. They feel out of control when they are stressed and feel in control when they are eating.
- Several studies believe stress rather than diet may cause lean women to gain weight.
- A Yale study shows cortisol makes slender women collect fat around the abdomen.
- Obesity weakens your immune system.
- Salty and sugary foods are comfort foods.
- Serotonin is the brain's mood-calming neurotransmitter – it is a feel-good hormone. When we are stressed, we don't get enough serotonin. Obese individuals self-soothe, self-calm and self-medicate. Carbohydrates and fatty, rich foods significantly increase “feel good hormones.” Once our serotonin level drops again, we want to self-soothe again. Our nervous system gets hyperstimulated, resulting in anxiety, depression and insomnia.
- There is a cortisol release cycle. Cortisol stimulates fat and carbohydrate metabolism for fast energy and also insulin release. The end result is an increase in appetite. High levels of cortisol stimulate appetite. You eat and get calm, which produces serotonin. This calms you until it wears off, and then the cortisol is produced again and appetite increases again. You eat to calm and feed the insulin release. It is a vicious cycle.

The Solution is S.E.L.F. Care:

- S=Serenity. Breathe, repeat affirmations, practice gratitude, laugh, sing, drink water.
- E=Exercise. Exercise produces endorphins, which are healing calming chemicals. In a recent Duke study, exercise relieves major depression as effectively as major antidepressants. Exercise boosts your immune system. Women who moderately exercise have a 50% reduction in cancers. Exercise helps us sleep.
- L=Love. Being in a group creates healing chemicals that calm and heal. Sharing your stories with others creates health.
- F=Food. B vitamins are brain food and help our nervous system function. B6 produce serotonin. Bananas, rice, sweet potatoes, tuna, turkey, chicken, salmon all are good sources of B vitamins.

Contact Us

**We are delighted to provide you
any additional information you require.**

Jim Hixon, MD
Medical Director and Chief of Strategy
The Stress Institute and Mindful Living Companies
360 Pharr Rd
Suite 644
Atlanta, Georgia 30305

JHixon@stressinstitute.com

(404) 310-6387



The Stress Institute