

Diseases and Conditions

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Unlike illnesses or infections, there are some conditions that can be hard to get rid of or maybe permanent. Some of these have risen to epidemic proportions. We will talk about the more common ones flooding the hospitals and clinics along with what to look for and what you can do.

Obesity

When we talk about obesity, we are not talking about Madison Avenue's skinny, waif-type image that CorpGov uses as mind control to sell things. Nor are we talking about eating nothing but egg whites or expensive powders from cans for months like the bodybuilders. We are talking about being out of shape. Some folks have a genetic disposition that lets them gain weight easily while others cannot gain pounds even if they eat two gallons of ice cream and four bags of chips. While it is usually okay not to obsess over a few pounds, anything over 20 pounds overweight that is not muscle is asking for trouble. Much further than 20 pounds BigMed calls being morbidly obese.

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Being too large causes problems. Many folks view those who are overweight as lazy even if they are not. You may sweat more and are prone to more body odor. You may have a more limited choice of quality compatible mates. If you are morbidly obese, folks gawk at you. Mobility and athletic ability may be limited. Low self esteem can set in, contributing to other problems. It leads to early onset of diabetes, joint and back problems, and decreased ability to perform strenuous tasks. In the worst cases, heart problems and stroke can develop with some having strokes as early as age 40.

The cure is simple, barring certain very rare hormonal problems. You must either consume less calories or increase the calories you burn or both. This means if you are not having to put out a lot of energy, you do not need to eat as much.

- Get out! Do at least 1 hour of exercise every three days. Even if this is walking around the block. We here at STW are huge fans of bicycles. Not only does this free us from being addicted to CorpGov's favorite drug of gasoline, it keeps us in great shape. The bicycle has the added advantage of being fun. If exercise is fun, you tend to do more of it. Why get in a car to go to a corner store when you can bike it or walk it.
- Do not just sit and eat easy, empty calorie CorpGov junk! Huge conglomerates like Frito Lay sell convenience and a full filling to the working poor by offering cheap, no preparation needed, calorie laden junk and have built empires on this. Do research on what foods are good and what should be eaten sparingly. Read the backs of food labels. You may be shocked at what you learn.
- Do not trust fad diets and stupid exercise devices. Some of these do actually work, but we have seen some pretty laughable contraptions like girdles hooked to electrodes and rubber sling activated resistance devices to press against the abdomen. Beware plopping down cash even on the devices that do actually work (like total gym) unless you already have a long, established habit of exercise on a religious basis or you have a job that requires being in good shape. Just having a great machine in your pad will not cure obesity. You have to use it. We have been in too many lower middle class houses with nice equipment that is never used except as a place to hang clothes. Most of the folks on the infomercials that sell these are paid models who live in a gym and make a living going to actor agencies for a tiny bit of cash. They did not lose weight using the device or being on the diet, but by a long term athletic lifestyle of healthy living because their job depends on it.

- Do not be discouraged if progress is not made rapidly. Many times, it took years of neglect to get in bad shape. It may take a process of months to reverse this.
- Lift weights! Increasing muscle mass is the easiest way to increase the amount of calories your body needs. No, you do not need an expensive rip-off gym membership or thousands in equipment. Even simple push ups and sit ups is considered resistance training.
- When you get in shape, stay in shape. Too many folks quit being healthy the moment they get to a certain goal only to fall back into old habits. Many times, they gain weight even above what they originally weighed within a very short time! No, you do not have to be a health zealot, but keeping active and watching what you take in should be a lifelong habit. Not just a several month “diet” or “program”.
- For the really bad off, there are surgical procedures like gastric bypass, stomach stapling, and liposuction. However, these are almost always considered elective procedures by insurance and medicaid, meaning most need to be paid for out of pocket. They also carry risks of serious complications.

Diabetes

One of the great plagues visited upon lazy Americans for sedentary lifestyles and mindless consumption of garbage is diabetes. A quick scan of the medical records of all the patients in any hospital at any given time will reveal that over half of them are diabetic. Indeed, diabetes is an epidemic of our time. Everyone either knows someone or has diabetes themselves. Diabetes has classic symptoms that include always being thirsty, frequent urination, always being hungry, slow healing, and extreme weak spells.

If left unchecked, it can lead to having to inject insulin when it was not needed previously, diabetic coma, kidney failure, dementia, strokes, blindness, and amputation of limbs that get infected and never heal!

Insulin is the hormone that regulates how sugar is processed. Too much sugary stuffs and fat can make the body resistant to insulin's effects. The sugar is then trapped in the bloodstream to wreak havoc. The kidneys have to work double time to remove all the sugar. This is the reason for kidney failure being common. Sugary flesh is a ripe target for all manner of bacteria.. particularly around the feet. This is the reason doctors ALWAYS check the feet of diabetics for cuts and infections. The excess sugar can also eventually clot off inside the fluid of the eyes causing blindness.

There are childhood onset (Type I) forms of the disease where insulin is simply not produced and adult onset types where insulin may be produced, but the body does not know how to deal with it (Type II) . There is also a rarer form that only occurs temporarily during a few pregnancies. Type I usually is purely genetic and not preventable. Type II is the most common - and the most preventable. DO NOT GET LIKE THIS!

- Diabetes CAN be prevented or even minimized (and some scientists claim cured) if an active lifestyle is maintained and a good diet is kept.
- Avoid too much sugar. Sugar is aptly called “the white death” when vast quantities are consumed. This is really important if you have a genetic disposition towards keeping body fat.
- Obesity is the number one cause of diabetes. Work to keep in shape and stay active.
- If you do have this disease, watch your feet! Keep your feet dry and free of fungus, bacteria, and other bugs by always wearing clean socks and drying your feet meticulously. Small infections that grow and never heal is the leading cause of diabetic amputations and sometimes dementia as a complication of the amputation particularly amongst older folks.
- Doctors often prescribe a blood sugar monitor to help identify if sugar is too high or if it is too low and a weak spell is approaching. With no insurance or medicaid, the strips for these machines are expensive (50 USD to 90 USD for 50 strips... that is not including needles and other stuff needed.)
- The cure for a weak spell for low blood sugar is a simple old nurse's trick. Simply drink a glass of orange juice with a pack of sugar in it. Be sure to eat a small snack right before sleep to keep blood sugar from going low in the night.

Cancer

Some cells never want to die. They just keep reproducing and reproducing and getting larger until they crowd out and kill everything around them. Sometimes they spread their kind to other places. This is called cancer and can be a serious problem if not caught early.

While much research is still being done, Cancer is believed to be caused by many chemicals, a very few viruses, exposure to radiation, over exposure to sunlight, and tobacco. Cancer can appear in any place in the body. The most common places are the lungs, breasts, prostate, and colon.

Women should always check their breasts to notice any unusual lumps. If any lump is found, they may need a mammogram.

All men are recommended to get a prostate exam as they get toward their late 40s.

Stroke

Often called a "brain attack", a stroke occurs when the blood vessels in the brain burst. Symptoms differ according to where in the brain the stroke occurred. It is caused by clogged arteries from either genetic disposition to store cholesterol or long term consumption of fatty foods, heart disease, bleeding disorders, and head injury. Chronic alcohol use, cocaine use, obesity, diabetes, and old age can increase the possibility of this happening.

It sometimes starts out as a severe headache that can wake someone from sleep and gets worse if someone moves, even to cough or shift positions. Other symptoms depend on what part of the brain is taken out.

- General weakness or paralysis on one side of the body.
- Trouble speaking and understanding what others are saying (if language centers are taken out).
- Vision can go out with blurred vision, double vision, or complete blindness.
- Confusion, loss of memory, and mood changes can develop.

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- Difficulty making sense of letters, sentences, and words.
- Dizziness
- Clumsiness, loss of balance, and lack of coordination.
- Changes in touch and the ability to feel.
- Loss of control over urine and bowels. (incontinence)

Immediate treatment is necessary to save lives and reduce any permanent disability. If treatment is started within 3 hours of a stroke, prognosis is very good. The doctors are going to give blood thinners, do MRIs and CAT scans, and may need to do surgery to clean out arteries or remove blood on the brain.

Many times, years of physical, speech, and occupational therapy is needed to recover, if ever. Sometimes the muscles that control swallowing are affected and the patient must have a feeding tube placed. Do everything you can to avoid this happening to you.

Heart Attack



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