

## FIGHTING OBESITY ONE POUND AT A TIME

Just days after I wrote “Lose Weight, Get Healthier, Not So Easy!” the CDC ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) announced that about 10 percent of medical costs in this country are linked to obesity. Expenditures of \$147 billion per year or 9% of all medical dollars spent treat problems related to weight. One out of three Americans is carrying an average of 23 extra pounds. The CDC study points out that obese individuals’ health costs are approximately \$1500 (@41%) more than individuals who do not have weight issues. Most of that money goes to pay for prescription drugs to control diseases such as Type II diabetes and heart conditions. These same individuals also have a higher incidence of disability and early death.

Twenty three pounds, you say, look around you! Who does not have 20 or more pounds to lose? It is easy to justify carrying extra pounds when everyone has the same problem. It is extremely difficult to follow a regiment to shed those pounds by modifying your diet. Everywhere you turn, you are tempted by high fat, high sugar, high calorie foods some of which are touted as “healthy”. Even when you think you are healthy because you exercising several times a week, if you do not shed pounds you need to pay attention.

The CDC ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) looks at the bigger issues – the health of the nation and how to implement changes that impact everyone including: regulating how foods are marketed and presented to the American public; taxing those foods that offer no nutritional value and educating Americans on healthy eating habits. I suggest they also look at regulating the multi-million dollar diet industry and those diet promoters who push fad diets and quick weight loss programs, many of which encourage you to continue to eat the same foods (albeit in smaller portions) that got you to where you are. The record shows that as soon as you go off those diets, you gain back all the weight you have lost and more.

The key to reducing the overweight population is to change people’s eating habits. For starters people need to eliminate all juices and sodas and products that contain white sugars, corn starch, and white flour. There are healthy eating programs and healthy foods are on the grocery shelves alongside the bad foods.

The USDA has a website ([www.finc.usda.gov](http://www.finc.usda.gov)) where individuals can go to learn about the recommended healthy foods, register and enter their name, age, weight. They can record and track their daily food intake and exercise program and the USDA site creates an individualized set of recommendations. It is an eye opener. The calories you think you have eaten are generally higher the exercise program you think you have completed to counter-act your intake of food is lower than required.

None of us are ready to give up the piece of apple pie with ice cream, chips, hot dogs, and glass of wine or beer completely. However, if we begin to understand what we are eating and how that fits in the overall nutritional scheme, it will be a start toward to a healthier nation.