

STAYWELL

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Health and Fitness Day

Mark your calendar for **IPSC ANNUAL HEALTH AND FITNESS DAY ACTIVITIES including the annual Fun Walk and Annual 5K on Wednesday, May 16**. All participants will receive a T-shirt. Shift workers and spouses may participate onsite May 16 or walk for 30 minutes at a location and time of their choice. Spouses coming onsite may need to be driven, or they can walk on the road northeast of the Admin to the reservoir rather than walk through the turnstile, unless they have gone through the Staywell Center badging orientation. Options are being looked at for activating guest badges. Check with Brian the day before the walk for more information. Other activities will be held onsite during breaks that day. See posted flyers for specific information.



Weight Loss and Improved Health: Are They the Same?

Americans spend \$60 billion dollars a year to lose weight. We live in a technology-rich society and people jump on this bandwagon very quickly. Presentations by people dressed in lab coats claiming to be doctors offer programs or products with "guaranteed scientifically proven results." Oftentimes these are marketing ploys. Some favorites are the ones where they have a white board with the sketch artist drawing and writing everything. With many of these, there is no out; there is no pause, fast forward, and getting to what they claim, unless you listen to the entire sales pitch. Additionally, they frequently claim the studies are scientifically proven, but do not provide

a reference for the study. If a legitimate internet search is done, nothing is found.

All too often medical providers fall for these gimmicks and recommend diets with no evidence-based practice behind them. This is where problems start to happen. Some are scams and provide no health benefit. A person may lose a lot of weight, but it forces the body to go into a mode reserved for extreme crisis. This may provide immediate results, but may cause serious health problems in the long run. One diet may claim a certain food is bad and another diet may claim the same food is scientifically proven to be good.

Factual Problem: Losing weight with a specific diet does not guarantee you are healthier even though your weight and lab work may improve.

If this is the case, why do below weight and ideal weight individuals still die of heart attacks and strokes? Here is an example: Obesity is a risk factor for heart disease. The most common way of determining obesity is the height-weight measurement known as Body Mass Indicator (BMI). Over 40 studies have demonstrated that BMI is a poor predictor of death from heart disease. In these studies, those who were overweight, according to the BMI, had fewer problems than those in the normal-weight category. Those in the lowest-weight category had the highest rate of death from heart disease and all other causes of death.

The skinniest people in these 40 studies had a higher risk of death than those who were overweight. Those who were in the "ideal" BMI also had a higher rate of death than those who were overweight.

Researchers are also asking the question, "Why?" Is it muscle mass? Is it because obese individuals seek help sooner and control the risk factors with medication? Is the wrong message being sent that everyone needs to lose weight and be skinny? Does it come down to lifestyle and choices? This doesn't mean that weight should be ignored. It does show that weight compared to height is not a good predictor of health. It may send a false message of being healthy to those who are not overweight and do not seek preventative health care, while those individuals who are overweight may be seeking preventative care more often and live longer.



Many of these new trends actually have no long-term data supporting them. People may lose weight and may be improving their glucose, cholesterol, and blood pressure. But individuals with normal blood pressure, normal glucose, and normal cholesterol die of heart disease also. Will this help people live longer? In 20 to 30 years we will find out. Evidence on lifestyle changes has been proven and continues to be supported.

Many longevity studies have looked at lifestyle and diet and demonstrated that certain populations live longer than others. As a matter of fact, all of the countries with the longest life spans eat a diet contrary to the popular trends being pushed today as healthy. These diets consist of whole grains (Oh my gosh! Carbs!), fruits, vegetables, healthy fats with limited dairy and meats. These individuals live up to 10 years longer than the average population. Two religious groups have been studied for many years and have a 10-year longer lifespan than the rest of the world: Mormons and Seventh-Day Adventists. Both of these lifestyles contradict the popular trends of today and are based on grains, fruits, and vegetables.

Other studies for the past 30 years have demonstrated that fitness level is a better indicator of longevity than weight. With all the information that is out there, do we look at misguided

interventions and trends that come and go? Do we focus on weight-loss diets? Should actual historical data that demonstrates people living a healthier lifestyle be evaluated? The focus needs to be on being active, eating moderate amounts of healthy foods, avoiding junk food, and living a moderate lifestyle. The focus needs to be on improved health rather than on weight loss since repeated research is demonstrating that being skinny does not necessarily mean we will live longer. What we do know is that measuring height and weight to assess health is not the best test for health, and weight loss is not a guarantee of a longer life. More to come. . . .

Sources:

- <https://www.webmd.com/heart-disease/news/20060817/bmi-bust-predicting-heart-risk#1>
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