

The Prairie Doc Perspective

A New Mindset About Obesity

By Richard P. Holm M.D.

I need to tell you frankly that trying to encourage people to lose weight is like telling them they should stop growing older, or to advise men going bald to stop losing hair. Most heavy people would love to be thinner, but it seems once the weight comes on, it is destined to stay there.

People blame the American diet, excesses of labor saving devices, and the addiction too many of our children have with video games. I believe that the epidemic of obesity in our society has something to do with the inactivity of our youth, but actually we don't know why some adults are heavy and some are thin. I will even go one step further in stating that until we truly understand why obesity happens, we will NOT have an effective non-surgical treatment.

One thing is for sure; obesity is not due simply

to excessive eating alone. More than one study points out that many thin people eat more than many obese. The corollary is also true; simply deciding to eat less does not solve the problem, at least in the long run.

The most successful of commercial methods, like Weight Watchers or TOPS, apparently help only about one third lose significant weight. What's worse, only one third of those are able to keep it off one year, and then after five years, virtually all have regained their original weight.

Here is the good news next to all the bad. There is new data, which shows that heavy people, who are able to significantly exercise, don't lose weight, BUT they gain in quality of life. These heavy exercisers have the same chance for a long and healthy life as do thin people.

We all need a new mindset. Instead of

weight loss as the goal, which for the most part is unachievable, we should do all we can to bring people to exercise, and that goes double for our kids.

Let's get off that couch and get moving, even if it's limited at first. And then we should love ourselves for doing it, whatever weight we may be.

Dr. Rick Holm wrote this *Prairie Doc Perspective* for "On Call," a weekly program where medical professionals discuss health concerns for the general public. "On Call" is produced by the Healing Words Foundation in association with the South Dakota State University Journalism Department. "On Call" airs Thursdays on South Dakota Public Broadcasting-Television at 7 p.m. Central, 6 p.m. Mountain. Visit us at OnCallTelevision.com.

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2000 Notices

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Do you have a desire to stop drinking? Join us at the Vermillion Unity AA Meetings held at Trinity Lutheran Church in the Sletwold Room (north entrance). Soaring Spirits group is Tuesdays at 7:30p.m., Steps Meeting is Wednesday at 7:30p.m., Happy Hour Group is Saturday at 7:30p.m., and Big Book Study group is Sunday at 7:30p.m. All meetings are non-smoking and handicapped accessible.

Driver Licensing Schedules: Vermillion 7a.m.-5p.m. Thursday & Friday; Yankton 7a.m.-5:30p.m. Tuesday, Thursday & Friday; Elk Point 8:30a.m.-4:30p.m. 1st & 3rd Wednesday; North Sioux City 8:45a.m.-4:30p.m. 2nd, 4th & 5th Wednesday. Call 1-800-952-3696 or visit www.state.sd.us/dps/dl for more information.

EMPOWERING YOU to take back your life. The Women Rising Support Group meeting weekly. Childcare is available upon request. Call 624-5311 for details.

Is food a problem for you? Does weight affect the way you live? Overeaters Anonymous meeting in Vermillion, Saturdays at 9:00am. Sanford Vermillion Hospital, 20 South Plum. (Administration door south of hospital entrance in board room.)

VISUALLY IMPAIRED meeting, 1:00 every second Monday of the month. For information 605-624-4063 or 605-653-1000.

2000 Notices

The Alzheimer & Memory Loss Caregiver Support Group sponsored by the South Dakota Alzheimer's Association, will meet the 4th Monday of each month, 7pm, at The Vermillion Public Library. Caregivers of memory loss persons are welcome to attend. Contact persons: Fern Kaufman, (605)624-4898, or Marilyn Abraham, (605)934-2534.

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