

Teenage obesity

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This article touches upon the question of teenage obesity. The author depicts this phenomenon, explains its causes and consequences and gives useful recommendations on healthy nutrition.

Nowadays teenagers are obese because of different factors of their lives. The increasing technological progress makes the youth become very lazy. By sitting at computer they reduce their physical activity and movements, and in concordance with the eating disorders some teenagers get very obese.

Persons who are exceptionally heavy may carry excessive weight for a variety of reasons. Factors leading to obesity can be divided into those that are psychological and those that are physiological. In any individual a combination of these factors can operate in the development and maintenance of obesity. In some teenagers psychological causes are associated with severe psychiatric disorders. In others, the overeating behaviour may act as an emotionally stabilizing influence, helping to support a person when he is anxious, stressed or depressed.

The abundance of food and lack of necessity to expend energy in our society make it easy for children to gain unwanted weight. The usual overweight or obese teenager is passive in interactions with others and with the environment. It aggravates the weight problem and leads to social isolation, lack of exercise and wrong manners of eating and family communication. Obese children may never feel comfortable eating in public. They fear to be seen wearing gym clothes or swimsuits or doing physical activities because they feel they are the object of attention and laugh. Instead, they usually spend a lot of time in passive activities such as watching television or reading. Both of them may be accompanied by eating. Commercial television especially supports this behaviour with often food-related advertisements.

It is interesting that many studies of obese teenagers have shown that they eat not more and sometimes less than normal weight adolescents [1]. But they often have wrong manners of eating. They may eat only in the second part of the day, eat very fast and mixed food.

A good programme of eating consists of different nutrients that supply a lot of energy and contribute to cell growth and our activity. Our table must contain calcium, sodium, magnesium, ferrum, iodine, sulphur. It must also include fats which provide 9 calories of energy per gram, but our body needs only very small amounts of it [2]. We should eat animal fats found in eggs, milk products, meat and also vegetable fats found, for example, in avocados, olives, some nuts and other vegetarian food.

For many people bread is the main everyday food. Despite bread is very tasty and gives energy, we have to know that the surplus of it can make us obese. That's why we should eat it carefully and in a strictly mode, just like eating in the morning, afternoon and in the evening only 35 grammes of bread. When we eat any kind of food, first of all we should mix it slowly and it is recommended to chew a spoon of food about 33 times.

Personal attitude in the problem of obesity is one of the most important aspects of initial evaluation whether an individual is ready to make changes. The question needs to be: 'Are you ready to make changes?' rather than 'Do you want to lose weight?' Many teenagers will answer 'yes' to the second question but remain totally passive. If obese teenagers keep fit, maintain energy balance, are emotionally healthy and understand the psychological aspects, they will be candidates for successful weight loss.

Bibliography:

1. Sizer F., Whitney E., *Nutrition – concepts and controversies*, West-Wadsworth, 1997, p.17.
2. Whitney E., Cataldo C., *Understanding normal and clinical nutrition*, West Publishing Company, 1991, p.27.