

The Truth about FAT!

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Our bodies require a minimum level of body fat for good health: men – 3-5%; Women 12-15%.

This is not something that most of us need to be concerned about as we struggle to keep our fat levels below 30% to stay healthy.

Australian statistics show that rates of overweight and obesity have almost doubled in the past two decades.

We all have a different number of fat cells surrounding the body. During childhood and adolescence, there are critical growth periods where cell numbers, include fat cells have a greater propensity to increase. At around the age of 16 years the number of fat cells are established and our lifestyle and genes both play a part in the outcome. Once numbers are determined, rarely are they reduced. What actually happens when we burn fat is the amount of fat stored within each fat cell decreases and the fat cell simply shrinks in volume.

Normally during adulthood, the number of fat cells remain about the same, except in the case of obesity. When the existing fat cells are filled to capacity, new fat cells can continue to be created in order to provide additional storage, even in adults.

We are all born with a genetically pre-determined number of fat cells. Some people are predisposed to have more fat cells than others and women have more than men. An infant usually has about 5 - 6 billion fat cells. This number increases during early childhood and puberty, and a healthy adult, with normal body composition, has about 25 to 30 billion fat cells. A typical overweight adult has around 75 billion fat cells. But in the case of severe obesity, this number can be as high as 250 to 300 billion! **The number of fat cells you possess will influence how difficult it will be for you to lose body fat.**

Regardless of the number of fat cells we have, we all have the potential to reduce body fat. But reducing fat percentage cannot occur within a few weeks. Weight loss must involve physical activity and be combined with sensible and healthy changes in eating habits. Long-term weight loss should last a lifetime. For people with a large number of fat cells, it will take more time and require a stricter but sensible exercise and diet routine.

Childhood Obesity

Obesity is set to become the biggest disease of the century. **Health experts say that curbing childhood obesity could prevent millions of cancer cases and other illnesses.**

Childhood obesity is increasing at alarming rates in many countries including the US, the UK and Australia. In Australia, one in five children or adolescents are overweight or obese. It is predicted that 50 per cent of young Australians will be overweight or obese by 2020.

The social consequences for obese children are devastating. Children who are obese have been shown to have low self-esteem and body dissatisfaction. They typically don't do as well academically, have poor job expectations and are socially isolated. **Obese children consider being overweight as worse than losing a limb.**

For these reasons, it is essential that parents take an active role in educating children about healthy eating and lifestyles. Their ability to understand the consequences of poor lifestyle choices and take responsibility for those choices are very limited and it is the role of the parent to provide guidance and enforce certain rules to ensure the child's health. Not playing an active role in a child's health and development is likely to sentence the child to a lifetime of struggling with weight, sickness and pain.

If somebody gave you a syringe that was labelled "*diabetes; cardiomyopathy; pancreatitis; liver problems; orthopaedic disorders (foot structure); respiratory disorders; reflux; gallstones and other stomach conditions; eating disorders*" would you inject it into your child? I didn't think so. Think carefully about how you are guiding your child and what habits you are teaching them for life!

If you would like to find out more about this and other health related topics, visit www.healingandabundance.com, your guide to healing physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.