A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Step Away From the Table

State-Specific Prevalence of Obesity Among Adults — United States, 2007

Recorded: July 22, 2008; posted: July 24, 2008

[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the MMWR, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Is America eating itself to death? A recent CDC study indicates that one in four persons in the United States is obese. Adults in their fifties had the highest rate. Failure to maintain a healthy weight can lead to serious health issues, such as heart disease and diabetes, and usually results in premature death.

Dr. Celeste Philip is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. She's joining us today to discuss obesity among adults in the United States. Welcome to the show, Celeste.

[Dr. Philip] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Celeste, how do you determine if a person is obese?

[Dr. Philip] Obesity is determined by taking a person's weight and height and doing a calculation called body mass index or BMI, and a BMI of thirty or above is considered obese.

[Dr. Gaynes] What is the main cause of obesity?

[Dr. Philip] Obesity has two primary causes, which are the type of diet one has and the level of physical activity. There are other factors that affect obesity, such as family history or genetics, which one really can't do very much about.

[Dr. Gaynes] What health problems can obesity lead to?

[Dr. Philip] Obesity leads to many different health problems, including diabetes, heart disease, and certain types of cancer.

[Dr. Gaynes] What's the most effective way to lose weight?

[Dr. Philip] Two areas that are very effective to focus on are physical activity and nutrition. Now, increasing physical activity doesn't mean that you necessarily have to go out and join a gym and spend a lot of money. Simple things that you can do to increase your levels are cleaning the house, walking to run errands rather than getting into your car and driving, gardening, or taking a walk around the block. Improving nutrition can be done by increasing fruits and

vegetables and trying to cut back on sugary drinks, such as soda or juice and increasing water intake. For more tips on improving nutrition, you can go to www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines.

[Dr. Gaynes] How can people maintain their weight loss?

[Dr. Philip] Well, once you've spent all that time losing the weight, you definitely want to maintain the weight loss and continue to enjoy the benefits of the way you look and the way you feel. A lot of people end up losing, gaining, losing, gaining and keep going back and forth, which is actually worse than not losing weight in the beginning. So, to maintain the weight loss that you've achieved, you want to really focus on life style changes, which means the new way that you start eating becomes the only way that you eat, and maintaining high levels of physical activity are also important.

[Dr. Gaynes] Where can listeners get more information about obesity and weight loss?

[Dr. Philip] Listeners can go to our website, www.cdc.gov, and do a search on obesity.

[Dr. Gaynes] Celeste, thanks for sharing this information with our listeners today.

[Dr. Philip] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] That's it for this week's show. Be sure and join us next week. Until then, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC.*

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.