



Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

— *Nutrition and Exercise 2005*

Learning for Life

The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension

The Problem

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that two-thirds of adult Americans are overweight and nearly a third are obese. Obesity and overweight contribute to the development of many chronic diseases including diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer, heart disease, arthritis and gall bladder disease.
- According to the Georgia Department of Human Resources, three-quarters of Georgians are inactive. Inactivity contributes to at least 32% of all heart disease, 18% of all cases of high blood pressure, 32% of all strokes, 18% of all diagnoses of diabetes and 32% of all falls due to osteoporosis.
- According to the 2005 Georgia County Guide, heart disease is the number one cause of death in Georgia. Heart disease accounted for 25.9% deaths in Georgia in 2003.
- During the decade of 1991-2000, Georgia experienced a 101% increase in the incidence of overweight and obesity, the highest increase in the country.
- Obese people have a 50-100% increase in risk for all causes of death, especially from cardiovascular disease, the number one killer in Georgia.
- Research done at the University of Georgia found that 20% of Georgia's children are overweight compared to 15% of all children in the United States. Overweight children and children at risk for becoming overweight were found more often in rural areas.
- Direct and indirect costs due to overweight and obesity to the US economy was estimated to be \$117 billion in the year 2000.

Research-based Solutions

- Work place activity programs can reduce health care costs by 20-25% and cut sick leave by 6-32% along with increasing productivity.
- Individuals with the most information about nutrition choose better diets.
- Body weight has less impact on morbidity and mortality if the person is physically fit.
- Reduction in risk for chronic diseases is difficult without regular physical activity.
- People with pre-diabetes can reduce their risk of developing type 2 diabetes by nearly 60% by losing 5-7% of their body weight and being moderately active for at least 30 minutes 5 or more days a week.
- The Centers for Disease Control estimates that if Americans were moderately active on a regular basis over the next 15 years, direct medical costs could be reduced by as much as \$76.6 million.

Extension's Role

- Conduct nutrition and exercise programs to reduce the incidence of chronic disease in those at risk and control chronic disease in those that have been diagnosed.
- Lead *Walk-a-Weigh* programs to increase physical activity and promote dietary change to control weight in adults.
- Use the *Win Kids* and/or *The Power of Choice* curricula to promote behavior change in children that will prevent overweight and obesity in children ages 10-13.

Extension's Contribution to Solving the Problem

- Extension nutrition programs provided over 50,000 hours of education to 51,640 individuals in 2005. Nearly 67% of them were low-income Georgians. Extension nutrition and chronic disease prevention programs provided over 7,000 hours of education to 13,625 Georgians. Nearly 46% of the participants were low-income people.
- The *Walk-A-Weigh* nutrition and exercise extension program provided 940 contact hours of education and reached 847 Georgians in 2005.

- Extension provided healthy lifestyle education using various media to thousands of Georgians. For example, 24 food, nutrition and exercise-related articles in newsletters reached 6,270 subscribers; 961 exhibits reached over 20,000 viewers; 29 radio spots were broadcast to a listening audience of nearly 1.5 million; 118 newspaper columns went to a circulation of over 1.5 million readers and television programs were targeted to over 100,000 people.

Impact on Georgians

- Of the Georgians who participated in nutrition education programs, 91% said the workshops helped them to make healthy food choices. At the end of the training, most of the participants planned to follow healthy dietary guidelines. For example, 83% planned to set at least one health-related goal to change their eating or activity habits; 84% planned to use the nutrition facts on the food label to make food choices; 81% planned to consider healthier food choices when deciding what to feed their families; 74% planned to eat the recommended servings from the food groups daily; 78% planned to eat vegetables and fruits that are dark and bright in color; 76% planned to consume whole grain breads and cereals; and 81% planned to choose the regular size food packages instead of the deluxe and super sizes.
- Nearly 86% of the participants who completed the weight control programs said the program helped them to learn healthy ways to lose body weight. Most of them planned to change some aspect of their life style. For example, 85% planned to reduce fat intake by frying less; 75% planned to do some type of moderately intense physical activity such as a brisk walking; and 88% planned to eat low-fat snacks and desserts.
- The comparison of pre and post-evaluation data shows that most of the participants who completed the *Walk-A-Weigh* nutrition and exercise program significantly improved their dietary and exercise habits. For example, 77% improved their exercise habits; 60% started eating at least two fruits everyday; 75% made a conscious effort to limit fat to 30% of total calories; 63% modified recipes to lower fat by using low-fat ingredients; 60% started reading nutrition labels to make healthy food choices; and 58% started eating at least two servings of low-fat or non-fat dairy products everyday.
- Comparison of pre and post-evaluations shows that 95% of the participants who completed the *Walk-a-Weigh* program improved their overall dietary and exercise habits and adopted a healthy lifestyle. The lifestyle changes helped the participants to reach weight loss goals and to reduce risk factors. This is confirmed by the clinical and medical data of *Walk-A-Weigh* participants. Seventy-eight percent of the participants were able to reduce their excess body weight by an average of 4 pounds during six weeks; 50% were able to reduce high blood pressure; and 81% were able to decrease their total cholesterol level.

Economic Impact on Georgians

The total estimated economic value of the *Walk-A-Weigh* nutrition and exercise program on Georgians was \$1,188,663.00 in 2005. Of this amount, \$1,135,248.00 of the potential lifetime health care savings for individuals participating in *Walk-A-Weigh* was due to improved health parameters associated with increased physical activity and another \$53,415.00 was due to an expected decrease in the incidence of Type 2 diabetes as a result of better weight control and regular exercise.

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