Food Fancies--Worth the Girth?

More Talk About Obesity--Is it Getting Boring?
A Nation of Obese--Some Food for Thought

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The stats keep pouring in and the news that they bring is getting worse. We are becoming a fat nation, eating our way to illness. Nearly half of adults are too heavy with fat, and more than 25% are clinically obese. We spend close to 30 billion dollars every 12 months on products that promise to slim us down. Hard by the home of your HealthWise reporter is a crudely printed sign: "I LOST 40 POUNDS IN 2 MONTHS. You can too. Call me." Beginning with a humble street-side advertisement, on to Phen-fen, then up to Jenny Craig with the invitations by royalty, the come-ons never end. Nor does the excess poundage and the dollar costs.

But it's more than dollars; it's disability and death.

Yes, there are a few that take pride in their adipose tissue (fat cells), but most of us who see ourselves as too heavy are more than eager to trim the fat, to normalize our weight. We have learned that weight reduction is no picnic. Indeed, for many it's well nigh impossible. Thus exists the bloated industry aimed at separating us from our health dollars as they promise to melt away the pounds.

"Well," one may ask, "What's so bad about being fat?" Consider these facts: Next to smoking, obesity generates the leading risk of several kinds of cancer. For example, obese women must assume a 50% increased risk of cancer of the breast. And fat men a 40% increased risk of cancer of the colon. Had enough? Here's more: Include cancers of the prostate gland, ovary, kidney and liver as malignancies that lurk among the obese. There's still more: High blood Pressure, diabetes (type 11) and heart diseases are bosom buddies with excess fat.

True enough, scare tactics don't assure a svelte figure, and there's no way to make it easy. So must we capitulate? Give up on this persistent public health epidemic? By no means! First, believe that normal weight is attainable. Then, resolve to make it happen! Yes, it can be done and there are many that have succeeded.

The cause is simple enough---when more calories are eaten than can be consumed, the excess goes on as fat. Hips, thighs, waist, chin etc. So, usually we must give up some feeding-fun. Then, we must burn more, stoke up the metabolic fires with exercise. Not easy to be sure. But for most of us it's possible, and well worth the effort.

Look, if we would simply cut our calories by 100 daily, and walk an extra mile daily we could burn off 200 calories. That's a loss of almost 2 pounds each month and about 20 a year. Too slow? Well, remember the longer it takes to lose it, the longer it will stay off. It's not a piece of cake, but it will be great to feel fit again! And to look well too.