Calorie Control Council

Commentary

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Vol. 37

Commentary: "Lite" Reading from the Calorie Control Council

The Calorie Control Council (the "Council") is an international association representing the low-calorie and reduced-fat food and beverage industry. Companies that make and use low-calorie sweeteners are among the Council's members. Now, more than ever consumers are seeking diet and health information from credible and reliable sources. The Calorie Control Council serves as a reliable health information resource with experts available to assist with questions and concerns from consumers, health professionals, and the media.

Please use the Council as a resource when looking for information on low calorie and "lite" ingredients and the products that contain them. For more information, visit the Council's website at **www.caloriecontrol.org**.

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Feed Your Mind

National Consumer Survey: Weight Consciousness Here to Stay

More than 186 million American adults – or eight out of ten men and women ages 18 and older – are "weight conscious," according to a new national survey recently released by the Calorie Control Council. Five out of ten (54%) want to reduce their weight, and noted that exercise, cutting back on sugar, using low-calorie or reduced-sugar products, and restricting the size of meal portions are the most common tactics. An additional 28 percent of Americans are trying to control or maintain their weight.

America's perspective on weight concerns appears to be well-founded. Latest numbers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics show that two-thirds of American adults are overweight or obese. "People are now hearing what health authorities have been saying for years – Americans are too heavy," says James Hill, PhD, Executive Director of the University of Colorado Anschutz Health & Wellness Center and co-founder of America On The Move, a national program with a mission to improve health and quality of life by promoting healthful eating and active living among individuals, families, communities and society. "Although America has a serious weight problem, the good news is that more and more people are trying to address it."

Among weight loss methods, cutting back on foods high in sugar was mentioned most often (by 86 percent of respondents). Other popular methods of weight control by those trying to lose weight include eating smaller portion sizes (85 percent) and consuming low-calorie and sugar-free foods and beverages (78 percent). Also, nearly two-thirds (64%) of Americans trying to lose weight say they perform moderate exercise for 45 minutes at least three times per week. At the other end of the scale, dieters do realize that short-term approaches will not result in lasting success – only 17 percent skip meals to diet, 13 percent use diet pills, and 8 percent follow restrictive weight loss diets.

While the reality may be sinking in, with many people trying to change their lifestyles for the better, most of those who are trying to lose weight admit they are frustrated by their lack of progress. They noted several obstacles to reaching their goals: not enough exercise (69 percent), metabolism slowing (62 percent) and too much snacking (52 percent). Some of the reasons given were more gender specific: Women often eat for emotional reasons (50 percent) while men find themselves overeating at mealtimes (44 percent).

"Many have taken the first step – admitting they want to lose weight for overall better health," says Beth Hubrich, a registered dietitian with the Calorie Control Council. In fact, 50 percent of American adults now say they need to lose at least 10 pounds, up from 40 percent in 2004. To succeed, health experts agree it takes a lifestyle change – permanent changes in eating and exercise habits to reach and maintain a healthier weight. "It's all about calories in and calories out. For healthy weight loss, reduce calories while eating a balanced diet, and burn calories through physical activity."

"A good way to start is by stopping any further weight gain by making small lifestyle changes," Hill notes. "Just cutting 100 calories a day can prevent the gradual weight gain experienced by most Americans. Continuing to increase regular exercise and eating smarter by reducing portions, and limiting fat and sugar intake will help in both losing weight and maintaining it. It is important to realize that these healthy changes need to be ones that can be maintained for life."

For additional survey information, please see charts on the last page of *Commentary*.

"Low-Calorie Products Usage and Weight Control Habits Survey," conducted by Booth Research Services, Inc. for the Calorie Control Council, November-December 2010.

Ogden, CL et al. Prevalence of Overweight, Obesity, and Extreme Obesity Among Adults: United States, Trends 1976-1980 Through 2007-2008. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey Data. Hyattsville, MD. June 2010

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What's New and What's True?

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New Research: Diet Soft Drinks Not Linked to Type 2 Diabetes

A new study, published in the June issue of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, demonstrates that the consumption of diet soft drinks as observed in a long-term follow-up study is not associated with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes. The researchers concluded, "This supports our hypothesis that participants use artificially sweetened beverages as dieting aids or because of poor health. A lack of adjustment for these [health and lifestyle] factors may therefore have contributed to illusory associations [between diet soda consumption and type 2 diabetes] in other studies." They further noted, "the association between artificially sweetened beverages and type 2 diabetes was largely explained by health status, pre-enrollment weight change, dieting, and body mass index."

The researchers followed 40,389 adult men enrolled in the Health Professionals Follow-Up study from 1986 until 2006, to examine the associations between the normal consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and diet soft drinks and the development of type 2 diabetes. The data from 2680 reported cases of type 2 diabetes developed over the 20-year study seemed to indicate that both types of beverages were associated with an increased incidence of type 2 diabetes. However, after adjusting for the health and lifestyle factors, including, family history of type 2 diabetes, smoking, physical activity, high triglycerides, high blood pressure, diuretic use, body mass index (BMI), and total calorie intake, the Harvard University researchers found no significant association between diet soft drinks and incidence of type 2 diabetes.

Major health organizations including the American Diabetes Association and the American Dietetic Association support the use of low-calorie sweeteners for people with diabetes to control calorie intake. The American Dietetic Association states in its position paper on the use of nutritive and nonnutritive sweeteners, "Nonnutritive sweeteners are appropriate in medical nutrition therapy for people with diabetes and may help control energy intake." The statement further notes, "nonnutritive sweeteners do not affect glycemic response and can be safely used by those with diabetes." "When used as part of an overall healthy diet, low-calorie sweeteners, diet soft drinks and other light products can be beneficial tools in helping people control caloric intake and weight," adds Beth Hubrich, a registered dietitian with the Calorie Control Council, an international trade association.

de Koning, L et al. Sugar-sweetened and artificially sweetened beverage consumption and risk of type 2 diabetes in men. Am J Clin Nutr: 93 (6) (2011). doi: 10.3945/ajcn.110.00792

American Dietetic Association. Position of the American Dietetic Association: Use of Nutritive and Nonnutritive Sweeteners. J Am Diet Assoc: 104 (2) (2004). doi: 10.1016/j.jada.2003.12.001

Diet Soft Drink and Cardiovascular Allegations Go Flat

Research findings presented in February claiming an association between diet soft drink consumption and increased risk of stroke and heart attack created a brief flurry of attention in the media, but do not in fact reflect the weight of scientific evidence, and have drawn criticism and skepticism from health and nutrition experts. "Soda Consumption and Risk of Vascular Events in the Northern Manhattan Study," included participants from the Northern Manhattan Study, a multi-ethnic, population-based cohort study that assessed the incidence and risk factors for stroke and included data on soft drink consumption.

The researchers claimed a 61% increased risk of vascular events was observed among participants who consumed diet soda daily, as compared to those who drank no soda. The sample size

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of those who claimed they drank diet soda on a daily basis was, however, remarkably small – only 4.5 percent of the total study sample. Also, the self-reported consumption figures were grouped into intake categories so general as to be of questionable reliability.

Although the researchers claimed to have controlled for such factors as smoking and physical activity, both of which can affect the risk of stroke, there is no mention of other critical factors including family history of heart disease or stroke, BMI, weight gain or composition of the diet. "I have to say, this is one of the worst studies I've seen capturing headlines in a long time," said Dr. Richard Besser, Chief Health and Medical Editor at ABC News, commenting during a February 10 segment on Good Morning America. Besser added, "They didn't look at how much salt they took in, they didn't look at what other foods they ate. Those things we know are associated with stroke and heart attack. They didn't even look at obesity over time. And so to conclude from this, that it's all from the diet soda, just makes no sense whatsoever... I don't think people should change behavior based on this study."

Sweet Substitutes

European Food Safety Authority Affirms Safety of Low-Calorie Sweeteners

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), following a comprehensive review of studies questioning the safety of low-calorie sweeteners, has concluded that these new studies do not give reason to reconsider the previous safety evaluations of aspartame or other low-calorie sweeteners.

In its February 28 statement, EFSA noted numerous methodological flaws and/or questions concerning the two studies, stating that in neither case can any scientific conclusions be drawn. In recent years, EFSA has conducted similar reviews of research and consistently came to the same conclusion: low-calorie sweeteners are safe. In 2009, for example, EFSA's Scientific Panel on Food Additives, Flavourings, Processing Aids and Materials in Contact with Food (AFC) stated: "Overall, the Panel concluded on the basis of all the evidence currently available including the last published ERF (European Ramazzini Foundation) study that there is no indication of any genotoxic or carcinogenic potential of aspartame and that there is no reason to revise the previously established ADI for aspartame of 40 mg/kg bw/day."

The recent study allegations -- regarding a carcinogenicity study involving aspartame and mice and an epidemiological study claiming a link between consumption of diet soft drinks and preterm delivery (discussed at length in the Fall 2010 issue of Commentary) – are at complete odds with the wealth of scientific literature demonstrating that low-calorie sweeteners are safe and do not cause adverse health effects. For example, an epidemiology study from the National Cancer Institute confirmed previous study conclusions that there is no link between aspartame consumption and leukemias, lymphomas and brain tumors. The study evaluated more than 500,000 men and women between the ages of 50 and 69 over a five-year period. A comprehensive review of more than 500 studies that was recently published in *Critical Reviews in Toxicology* also found that aspartame is safe and not associated with cancer. The review was conducted by a panel of eight leading experts in the areas of toxicology, epidemiology, metabolism, pathology, and biostatistics.

For the full EFSA report, visit: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/2089.htm

Lim U, et al. Consumption of aspartame-containing beverages and incidence of hematopoietic and brain malignancies. Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev 2007;16:1527.

Magnuson BA, et al. Aspartame: a safety evaluation based on current use levels, regulations, and toxicological and epidemiological studies Crit Rev Toxicol. 2007;37(8):629-727.

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Experts Weigh In

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Fructose Not Fattening, According to Two Studies

Two recent comprehensive literature reviews investigating the metabolic effects of fructose conclude that fructose does not increase food intake or impact body weight or blood triglycerides in either normal weight or overweight or obese individuals. In the first, data was examined regarding the normal consumption of fructose and any subsequent development of alterations in lipid and/or glucose metabolism or weight gain in overweight people. The research team, led by Laurie Dolan, PhD, senior toxicologist with food-safety consulting firm, The Burdock Group, was unable to find any relationship between the consumption of fructose and hyperlipidemia or increased weight. These findings support the results of a second, similar review that analyzed the role of fructose on blood lipids, glucose, insulin and obesity among the healthy, normal weight population.

The research reviews, both published in *Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition*, were conducted to investigate the hypothesis that the increased dietary consumption of fructose in the last 40 years may be responsible for the parallel increase in obesity and diseases associated with obesity. Dr. Dolan, lead author of both studies concluded, "There is no evidence that ingestion of normal amounts of fructose is associated with an increase in food intake or body weight (compared to other carbohydrates), when it is not consumed in caloric excess. This is true for both normal weight people and people that are overweight or obese."

Both of these reviews utilized an evidence-based approach employed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) when evaluating potential health claims for foods, beverages and food ingredients. The conclusion drawn from the two reviews was that consumption of fructose does not increase triglycerides, body weight, or food intake in either normal weight or overweight/obese people. Researchers investigated the metabolic effects of fructose up to 95th percentile intake levels, which is considered the high end of dietary ingredient consumption.

For more information regarding fructose, visit www.fructose.org.

Dolan LC, Potter, SM, Burdock GA. Evidence-Based Review on the Effect of Normal Dietary Consumption of Fructose on Development of Hyperlipidemia and Obesity in Healthy, Normal Weight Individuals. Crit Rev Food Sci Nutr 2010 50;1:53-84.

Dolan LC, Potter SM, Burdock, GA. Evidence-Based Review on the Effect of Normal Dietary Consumption of Fructose on Blood Lipids and Body Weight of Overweight and Obese Individuals. Crit Rev Food Sci Nutr 2010 50;10:889-918.

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Get Physical

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American Dietetic Association Report Analyzes U.S. Children's Nutrition and Physical Activity Status

The American Dietetic Association and its Foundation (ADAF) recently released a report card summarizing the current eating and activity behaviors of U.S. children and their families, noting that while families have made some "satisfactory" changes in these patterns since a similar report was conducted in 2003, these efforts "need significant improvement" to meet current recommendations. The 2010 State of Family Nutrition and Physical Activity Report, released earlier this year, is based on a survey of school-aged children and their parents designed to assess how nutrition and physical activity behaviors relate to the prevalence of obesity and malnourishment, as well as unique opportunities and strategies to improve the health of our nation's children. The report also includes an analysis of research from key food, nutrition and health associations.

The ADAF's 2010 Family Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey was administered nationwide to 1,193 pairs of children ages 8 to 17 and their parents within three population samples (Caucasian, African-American and Hispanic), and examined eating habits, physical activity and attitudes. Some key findings follow, as well as trends since the 2003 survey was conducted:

Eating Behaviors

- Since 2003, the number of daily family meals eaten at home has increased significantly, from 52 percent in 2003 to 73 percent in 2010.
- A majority of American families are not eating at fast food or sit-down restaurants often, with 51.4 percent of Caucasian, 56.5 percent of African-American and 63.8 percent of Hispanic children reporting their families eat there less than once a week or never.
- Children eat while doing many routine activities including homework, watching television, playing computer games and talking on the phone. Approximately one-fourth of children report eating while watching TV and the same number say they eat after dinner.

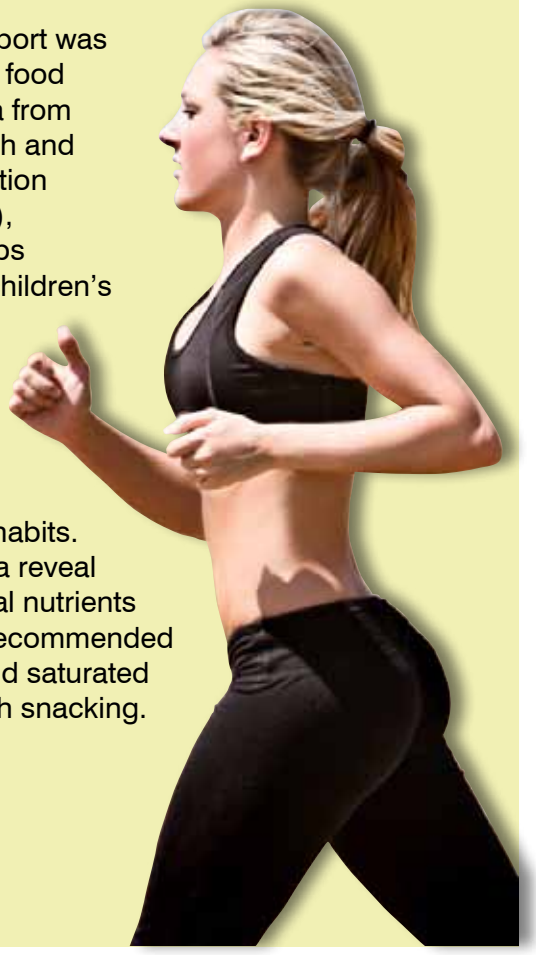
Family Influence on Activity Behaviors

- Significantly, the survey revealed that, since 2003, the number of children engaging in physical activity with their parents three or more days a week has increased by 93 percent, although the rate of activity is still much lower than national recommendations.
- As in 2003, most of the activities families engage in together are sedentary, such as watching TV or movies or playing video games.

Nutrition Knowledge of Families

- Families are more aware of what they should not eat than what they should eat. Less than 25 percent of parents and children correctly identified grains as the food group from which the most servings should come. When asked which food group should provide the fewest servings daily, 74.2 percent of Caucasian, 63.2 percent of African-American and 66.4 percent of Hispanic children correctly identified the group of fats, oils and sweets.

Included in the report was a review of recent food consumption data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), indicating that gaps remain between children's recommended and actual intake of key nutrients despite national efforts to improve children's eating habits. The NHANES data reveal a low intake of vital nutrients and higher than recommended intake of sugar and saturated fat, largely through snacking.



Trends and Statistics

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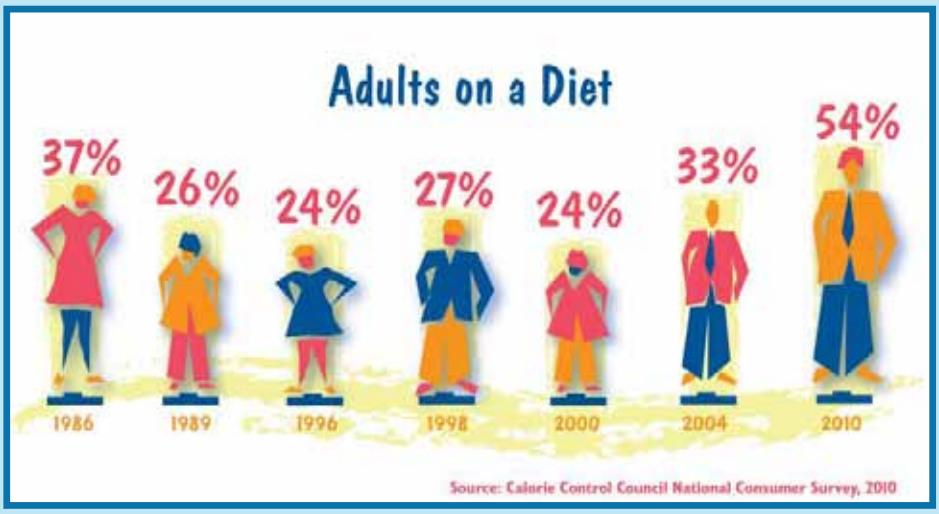

More and more Americans are trying to lose weight. In general, people continue to understand that restrictive dieting (deprivation, short-term solutions) spells failure. Instead, it takes permanent lifestyle changes to lose weight and prevent weight gain. Fifty-four percent of U.S. adults are currently trying to reduce their weight.