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NEBRASKA**A Reason for Americans to Eat MORE**

Before clicking the back button thinking this is a strange article, let's look at research studies. First the opposition: Researchers attribute the rising incidence of obesity not to "couch potatoes" but to an overeating epidemic. It's no wonder personal clothing sizes have increased when high fat and high sugar foods are readily available to eat in less than five minutes anytime of the day or night.

Now the defense: Is the personal answer for losing weight to eat less food? No. People on low-calorie diets cannot maintain that lifestyle for very long, and as soon as they reject their current fad diet, they usually regain all of the weight lost plus additional pounds.

The answer to losing weight is actually to eat more—not calorie rich foods, but nutrient rich foods like fruits, vegetables, and complex carbohydrates. Only 26% of American adults eat the minimum recommendation of 4½ cups of fruits and vegetable each day, according to the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. The body actually feels satisfied with food intake when a person consumes a certain amount of bulk (rather than a certain amount of calories). For example an airy, high calorie donut doesn't satisfy the satiety level and stave off hunger as well as a slice of whole grain bread or a cup of vegetables.

Researchers at the University of Texas-Austin compared the diets of overweight people to the diets of normal weight people. Those of normal weight ate 33% more dietary fiber and 43% more complex carbohydrates than the overweight group. Currently, Americans eat only about half of the recommended 25-30 grams of dietary fiber a day. Besides creating fullness, fiber-rich foods also pack more nutrients, help regulate bowel movements, lower cholesterol, stabilize blood glucose levels and may reduce the risk of getting certain types of cancer.

For a decrease in obesity and an increase in health, Americans need to eat a diet of MORE fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

**Sources:**

Tufts University Health & Nutrition Letter, August 2009.

Field AE and others: *Relation between dieting and weight change among preadolescents and adolescents. Pediatrics* 2003, **112**:900-906

*Healthy Years*, UCLA Division of Geriatrics, Vol. 4G

Dietary Fiber, [www.ext.colostate.edu/PUBS/FOODNUT/09333.html](http://www.ext.colostate.edu/PUBS/FOODNUT/09333.html)

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