

Health Beat

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Working Toward a Healthy Body

By Noemi Orozco

Everyone knows that good nutrition is a critical component of physical health and an important part of our daily lives, but there seems to be little consensus between health gurus, fad diets, and media advertisements for recommendations about what to eat and how to maintain physical health.¹ What is true is that proper exercise and following a balanced diet promote health and a sense of well-being. There is also hope that a healthier adulthood can be prepared for by beginning proper exercise and diet hab-

its during adolescence, if not during childhood.²

In a recent survey answered by American undergraduate students, 48% of overweight female participants acknowledged they were currently on a diet. And 21% of women with normal body mass indexes (BMIs) claimed to be on a diet. For the male participants, the overweight and the normal BMI students did not differ significantly when answering the question on whether they were on a diet, with answers totaling 26% and 20%, re-

spectively.³ Even though the link between diet and health has been promoted to the American public in past years, food products have since changed their contents of fat, sugar, and energy. And these types of foods have invaded the marketplace. Studies show that "energy-dense, nutrient-poor" foods continue to make up a substantial part of American diets.⁴

Of individuals reaching the age of 21, only 30% of females and 42% of males

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Special points of interest:

- **Men's Health Clinic** provides preventive care through medical services, health education, and promotion of healthy lifestyles. The complete exam costs only \$11.70. Appointments can be made in person or on the phone.
- Check with us for future **Sexual Health Awareness Workshop (SHAW)** dates. This program is necessary for females seeking birth control through the university.
- Student Health Services invites female students to participate in the **Herpes Vaccine Trial for Women**. Those interested must be healthy, without herpes, and 18 to 30 years old. Call (562) 985-4874 for more information.

Tea Time for Weight Loss?

By Amanda Matthews

In the quest to lose weight, some dieters try weight teas. These teas contain herbs such as senna and cascara sagrada that have a laxative effect. However, this effect does not translate into weight loss.¹ Any weight loss that does occur is minor, temporary, and due to water loss.¹

Some consumers believe that increased bowel movements will prevent absorption of food, thereby decreasing the body's calorie intake.² However, the majority of food absorp-

tion occurs in the small intestine before the food material reaches the colon, the site of laxative action.^{1,2}

The teas can be safe when used according to the instructions. However, first-time users who drink too much tea might experience stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Chronic effects, including severe pain and constipation, usually occur after years of use. Chronic use among anorexics and bulimics might lead to fainting, dehydration,

electrolyte disorders, irregular heartbeat, paralysis, or even death.¹ The FDA is considering whether to add a warning to the product label.¹

Slimming teas are ineffective products for weight loss. Consumers should follow instructions carefully when using slimming teas and other supplements containing diuretics.

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Laxatives found in tea do not translate into weight loss, just temporary water loss.

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Healthy Body...

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dedicate time to routine, vigorous physical activity, and 50% begin an exercise program, abandoning it within six months.⁵ Ten percent of adults participate in regular vigorous physical activity, and 22% participate in regular moderate physical activity.⁵

The amount of time people actually participate in physical activity decreases over a person's lifetime. The most popular types of exercise for women were walking and aerobics.⁶ The most popular exercises practiced among men

were walking and weight training.⁶

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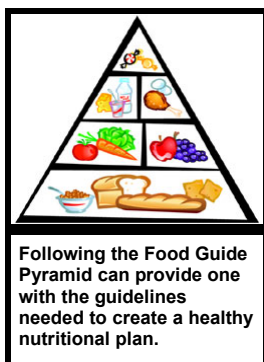
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Consideration of Body Composition

By Yumi Lee

In recent years, the decline in lean body mass has become one of the most important areas of understanding weight issues in the United States, since recent estimates suggest that 1 in 2 adults is overweight or obese.¹

Although body composition estimates for the U.S. population are important to analyze trends in obesity, national body composition estimates have not previously been available.² Many scientists have been studying body composition, but research has increased dramatically in the last 25 years as methods for measuring and analyzing the body have grown in accuracy. By measuring body composition, a person's health status can be more accurately assessed and the effects of both dietary and physical activity programs better directed.



The most reliable and accurate way of measuring body composition is the post mortem autopsy, when the exact ratio of lean and fat mass can be determined. "In Vivo" techniques are those performed on living subjects, but only yield an estimated body composition. According to the National Institutes of Health, there are many methods for measuring body composition, but there are no trial data to indicate that one method is better than any other. Most research studies employ several methods used in combination.³

Improving body composition means to reduce fat mass and increase fat-free mass. It is important to remember that weight loss represents only scale measurement reduction, not a reduction of fat mass. You may lose your fat-free mass by restricting your caloric intake, but it is important to under-

stand that certain amounts of body fat are required to perform the normal physiological and metabolic functions. Many popular diets target weight reduction, rather than body composition improvement, even though enhancement of your health is very closely related with a good body composition.

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