

TO YOUR HEALTH



DR. KEITH LEVICK

Halloween is a sweet time for kids and parents

Many think the "traditional" holiday season begins with Thanksgiving. For children, however, it begins on Halloween. Collecting candy in a bag has to be every child's fantasy.

In today's nutritionally concerned society, though, we're aware of the consequences of eating too many sweets. As obesity among children continues to escalate, many parents are uneasy about the upcoming sugar-packed evening that is Halloween.

- The average American consumes two ounces of sugar a day or 42 pounds per year. So, let's look at the sugar facts before the battle with our children begins.
- Sugar does not cause diabetes.
- Sugar does not cause hyperactivity in children.
- The consumption of fructose, sucrose, corn syrup and other sweeteners (usually ending in "ose") has increased 250 percent in the past 15 years.
- Researchers have identified a relationship between a high fructose diet and cholesterol and triglyceride levels.
- Sugar contains four calories per gram; fat has nine calories per gram.

The overall health risks of sugar are fairly negligible in comparison to fat. In examining the differences between some of the popular fat-laden candy bars and candy without fat, healthy choices become obvious.

- Peanut M&M's (11.6 oz.) - 240 calories/45 percent fat
- Nutella's Crunch (11 oz.) - 390 calories/47 percent fat
- Rit Kit (11.3 oz.) - 102 calories/50 percent fat
- Snickers (12 oz.) - 270 calories/43 percent fat

- Candy Corn (10 pcs.) - 68 calories/0 fat
- Jelly Beans (1.5 oz.) - 150 calories/0 fat
- Good 'N Fruity (1.5 oz.) - 150 calories/0 fat
- Suckers (10) - 39 calories/0 fat

Before the children set out on their sweets journey, take time to do the following:

- Discuss the nutritional effects of eating too much candy, but remember you don't want to deprive your child. Instead discuss available healthy choices and decide on the best solution together.
- Serve dinner earlier than normal. Make sure your kids fill up on healthy foods before going out for the evening.
- Review safety issues.
- The following tips also make good health sense once the candy has made its way home:
 - Have your child choose the candy he or she likes best and throw the remainder away.
 - Eat a limited amount of candy each day. Parents and children together can decide on the amount per day.
 - Keep the hard candy (suckers, gum drops, etc.) because they contain less fat and calories.
 - Don't allow the kids to keep candy in their rooms.
 - Keep candy in the cupboard where it's not easily seen - out of sight, out of mouth!
 - Purchase the candy from your child. Allow the child to spend the money on a favorite toy.
 - Discuss that many unfortunate children don't have the opportunity to celebrate a traditional Halloween because they're in a hospital, for example. This could be an ideal time for your child to voluntarily share their goodies with other children.

For the 60 percent of adults struggling with a weight problem, here are a few tips for you:

- Eat a healthy meal before the kids come knocking at the door.
- Try focusing on the costumes if you are passing out the candy.
- Purchase candy you and your child dislike.
- Have a diet soda or something to sip on when passing out the candy.
- Chew gum so you won't be tempted to eat the candy.

Nutritionally speaking, Halloween is an unhealthy night. But observing these suggestions can allow your child to still have fun with minimal consequences. Enjoy!

(Dr. Keith Levick is a health psychologist and the director of The Center for Childhood Weight Management in Farmington Hills. You can reach him at 248-855-2771 or send him an e-mail at klevick@aol.com.)

Study indicates millions of state adults suffer from chronic pain

Pain may hurt a lot more than we think. Results of the Michigan Pain Study announced last Monday indicate that one in five adults, or about 1.2 million people in Michigan, suffer from some form of chronic, ongoing or recurring pain. For many, pain appears to be having a major effect on how these individuals perform and interact at work, in daily living and in relationships.

The study, conducted by the public opinion firm, EPIC/MRA of Lansing, surveyed 1,810 Michigan residents, 18 and older, to determine the severity of the chronic pain problem, how people cope, access to treatment and the effectiveness of available pain care. The Michigan Pain Study is believed to be the most comprehensive look at chronic pain and its impact ever conducted in the United States.

Of the 1.2 million people in Michigan who suffer from chronic pain, 42 percent say pain has affected their relationships with spouses, family members and fellow workers. Nearly half (48 percent) experience depression, 18 percent have overdosed on pain medication and 10 percent - about 120,000 - have contemplated suicide.

"Pain is a major health problem not only for those who directly suffer from it, but for everyone in Michigan," said Ed Stropulus, executive analyst. Ed Stropulus of EPIC/MRA. "The costs to society are real in the form of lost productivity, repeat hospital visits and ineffective treatment. In addition, the situation is denying people and their families basic quality of life."

In the workplace, pain is responsible for 400,000 workers, or 12 percent of the Michigan work force, failing to

show up for work at some point last year. Of the pain sufferers surveyed, 35 percent missed more than 20 days of work in the last year.

Hospital emergency rooms saw 21 percent of surveyed pain sufferers an average of four times during the last year. The majority (70 percent) of Michigan pain sufferers say they still experience pain after treatment, while 22 percent said treatment actually makes their pain worse. Of those in pain surveyed, 65 percent have never seen a specialist or professional who specializes in treating chronic pain.

"This study includes adults 18 and older, but countless numbers of children are also suffering from chronic pain," said Joel R. Saper, M.D., chairman of the Michigan Council on Pain. "If you combine the number of children and adults in pain, the cost becomes even greater in both economic and human terms. This study tells us that we must do more to make sure that Michigan citizens receive the care they need."

Findings of the Michigan Pain Study also point to differences in how men and women handle pain, geographic differences across Michigan and the correlation between income and reported incidents of pain.

The Michigan Pain Study was conducted in September 1997 and sponsored by the Pain Education Fund of Chelsea Community Hospital in Chelsea, Michigan.

HEALTH FINDINGS

MICHIGAN PAIN STUDY

(Respondents are Michigan adults, age 18 or older)

THE PAIN PROBLEM

- One in five (about 1.2 million) Michigan adults experience some form of chronic, ongoing pain.
- 40 percent of those indicate the pain is "constant" and has a major impact on their lives.
- 77 percent of these have experienced pain for more than one year.
- 42 percent of pain sufferers indicated their pain affects relationships with spouses, family and fellow workers.

IMPACT ON THE WORKPLACE

- 35 percent of pain sufferers (about 400,000) missed more than 20 days of work in the last year because of pain.
- 42 percent of Michigan workers failed to show up on the job at least once last year due to pain.
- 28 percent of pain sufferers (about 360,000) said their pain was severe enough to impair their ability to perform their jobs on more than 20 work days during the past year.

LIVES AT RISK

- 10-15 percent of pain sufferers (120,000-180,000) can be considered at risk.
- 5 percent of pain sufferers (about 60,000) drink alcohol in response to their pain.
- 18 percent of pain sufferers admit to overdosing on pain medication.
- 48 percent of pain sufferers report "getting depressed" about their pain.
- 10 percent of pain sufferers (about 120,000) have thought about committing suicide.

ACCESS TO TREATMENT

- 21 percent of pain sufferers (about 252,000) visited a hospital emergency room an average of four times in the last year. Of these, two percent received treatment for medication overdoses.
- 70 percent of pain sufferers indicated they still experience pain after treatment.
- 22 percent said treatment "only makes it worse."
- 13 percent (about 140,000) of pain sufferers said they have been denied access to pain medications, medical devices and/or referrals to other professionals and/or pain centers. Half of pain sufferers regularly see no doctor or see only a family doctor for their pain.
- 22 percent feel uncomfortable talking about their pain with their doctors.
- 22 percent feel medical professionals lack the knowledge or understanding to treat their pain.

MEAN VS. WOMEN IN PAIN

- 67 percent of men indicated they "under report" pain versus 47 percent of women.
- Twice as many men (14 percent) said they contemplated suicide because of their pain, as compared to women (7 percent).
- Men under age 50 are most likely to have pain for more than one year (86 percent) compared to 75 percent for men over 50; 69 percent for women over 50 and 79 percent for women under 50.
- Men under age 30 are by far the most likely to call in sick to work because of pain.

HEALTHY LIVING

Healthy Living spotlights Oakland County-related health and medical news and information. To submit information, write: Healthy Living, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009. Or fax: (248) 644-1314.

PERSONAL

David Axelrod can be a very persuasive individual. The clinical immunologist and M.D. recently convinced his colleagues at the Birmingham Hospital that they can maintain a successful practice working in conjunction with The Detroit Medical Center's Huron Valley-Sinai Hospital in Commerce Township. Axelrod is a stranger to the system, as he was affiliated with DMC from 1986-96.

"With the expansion project ongoing at Huron Valley-Sinai and the growth in primary care physicians in Oakland County, I am convinced the DMC was the right place for us to go," said Axelrod, who graduated from The University of Michigan. "I am confident this partnership will work."

Axelrod's practice deals with the diagnosis and treatment of allergic, rheumatic and other immunologic diseases. He is also a certified specialist in medical laboratory immunology, a field dealing with the performance and interpretation of laboratory tests used to diagnose and follow patients with immunologic diseases.

As his past experience includes work at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Md., an associate professor at the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences and as principal investigator at Walter Reed Army Institute of Research. For appointments, interested patients may call Axelrod's office at (248) 646-5884.

PRESSURE POINT THERAPY

Free Pressure Point Therapy Workshops will be conducted in the upcoming weeks. Space is limited, so call ahead of time to secure a spot. The workshops will be conducted by Dr. Ross

Winn, and to register call Health Steps at (248) 828-7774.

Location: MedMax of Troy, 6843 Rochester Road, southwest corner of Rochester Road and South Boulevard.

When: 10 a.m. Nov. 11 and Dec. 2 and 7 p.m. Dec. 16. Learn how to do-it-yourself for conditions including headaches, back pains, sinus/allergies and more.

Location: MedMax of Troy, 740 John R Road near 14 Mile Road. When: 7 p.m. Nov. 18 and Dec. 9. Learn how to do-it-yourself for conditions including headaches, back pain, sinus/allergies and more.

BOOK SIGNING

Oakland Athletic Club Fitness Director Dana Mitchell will sign copies of *The Workout Cop-Out: A Daily Avoidance Guide for Fitness Phobics on The-Go*. Oct. 23 at the OAC, located at 355 S. Old Woodward in Birmingham.

Mitchell co-wrote the book with her sister, author Stacey Granger.

FAMILY HEALTH DAY

Henry Ford Medical Center-Troy is sponsoring a free Family Health Day from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 25 at Faith Lutheran Church (37635 Dequindre) in Troy. Exports from the Troy medical center will host discussions on a variety of health topics including childhood first-aid, breast cancer awareness, habits for a healthy pregnancy, menopause and osteoporosis, men's health, and energizing your heart.

Free information on cholesterol, skin cancer, depression, anxiety and other life issues will be provided. Blood pressure checks will also be offered along with a "ouch clinic" designed to help children learn what to expect during a visit to the doctor.

Call Faith Lutheran Church at (248) 689-4664 for specific details.

When it comes to dieting, the slow journey is safer

Looking for a quick fix to help you lose weight? How about a pill to help you sleep?

Everywhere I turn I see people trying to take shortcuts in their lives to do things faster. It's so easy to fall into the trap of always needing a faster car, a higher speed computer, or a job of caffeine for a quick energy boost.

Slow down! If you're not careful you could be speeding your way into trouble. It's important for all of us to take a step back and re-evaluate what we truly want out of life. What makes us happy - not just right now but also over the long haul.

I often ask myself, "What is my goal? How can I reach it? Why do I want it?" When I ask myself these questions, I usually find that my overall happiness and well-being. I want to lose weight to feel better about myself and to feel healthier so that I can continue to play with my grandchildren for the next 20 years or so. The added benefit of fitting into that favorite dress for a party next month is a short-term bonus.

If my goal is a good night's sleep, I want one tonight and every night so that my energy will be up and my mind will be sharp every day. Popping a sleeping pill at night or drinking a pot of coffee in the morning will not make me feel refreshed. Those quick fixes would probably leave me with a headache and make it even harder to sleep the next night. My body would be telling me that it's time to de-stress, clear my mind, and take time for myself!

Whether it's the coffee or the diet pills that are calling you, get out of the fast lane for a moment and listen to your body. In the hustle and bustle of daily life it's easy to forget what it is we ultimately want

to achieve. Happiness often gets lost under the paperwork on your desk or left behind in the dust of your tire tracks.

Please, please take a deep breath of fresh air and turn into the slow lane for a while. Think about what you're so busy rushing to do and why it's so important. You may just find that you are going down a dangerous road, albeit the quickest route.

When it comes to dieting, the "fast" way is definitely not the safe way. It's easy to get lured in by the advertisements and labels that promise "quick weight loss" or that tempt you by claiming that a pill will miraculously "suppress your appetite." The truth is most of these pills are a shock to the system. They often artificially burn out fat, but when you lose those pounds so quickly it will put a tremendous strain on your heart. Worse yet, researchers are finding more and more harmful, even fatal, side effects to these so-called diet pills. Who knows when else they'll find in the years ahead!

If you are serious about losing weight, getting into shape and feeling healthier, you need to take your time. As you start to snack on fruits instead of chips and take walks instead of watching TV, you'll begin to feel better about yourself and your life. It is so energizing to know that you have the power to control what fuels your body and you have the power to get up and get moving. By popping a pill, you give up all your control. And what happens the day you stop taking the diet pills? You guessed it! The weight piles right back on. This up and down yo-yo dieting is even more dangerous to your cardiac health!

If you take time to lose weight, you are more likely to keep the pounds off and have a healthier body. A healthier, trimmer body equals a happier, more energetic you!

There may be a time and a place for life in the fast lane, but when it comes to losing

weight and changing your lifestyle, the slow route will lead you to more long-term success and happiness.

Do me a favor, whether you're trying to lose weight or get a good night's sleep or to achieve whatever goal you feel is important, ask yourself why you want it. If the ultimate goal is for a happier, healthier you, take the time to do it right. You'll feel better in the long run.

I read every one of your letters and I love your comments. Please keep writing me with any questions, inspirational stories or suggestions for upcoming articles to "Talk to the Mirror," Weight Watchers Corporate Communications, P.O. Box 9072, Farmington Hills, Mich. 48334-2974, or fax (248) 453-7106.

(Florine Mark is also a member of the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness.)

TEENS LOSE FOR FREE THROUGH WEIGHT WATCHERS PROGRAM

Weight Watchers is joining the battle against adolescent obesity through a unique program designed to help teens establish lifelong healthy eating habits.

As young 10-18 years of age can join Weight Watchers for free with a paying adult throughout the remainder of October, and those teens can continue to attend for free as long as the adult attends paid consecutive meetings.

"Weight Watchers has recently unveiled a new program called 1-2-3 SUCCESS that makes losing weight easier than ever," said Florine Mark, President and CEO of the W.W. Group, Inc., the largest franchise of Weight Watchers International. "Now teens can eat healthier and lose weight without the hassle normally associated with dieting."

Weight Watchers is proud to help teens learn healthy eating habits by offering free meetings and registration. A one-time fee of \$10 will be charged to cover costs of printed materials. Call 1-800-851-6000 for more information.