

Obesity



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Obesity 2007 Obesity is a very complicated problem, and its reasons can be different. Primary (alimentary constitutional) obesity is not connected with any diseases, and is caused by regular consuming increased amount of calories, lack of exercise, bulimia, and is often of inherited character.

Secondary obesity is a symptom of some diseases - hypothyroidism, hyperinsulinism, encephaloma, or (which happens rarely though) inherited genetic syndromes. Intake of some medicaments can also cause obesity. All reasons for secondary obesity should be cured together with other symptoms of the disease, and surely only by doctors, at the first place - endocrinologists.

Obesity is a serious illness that has been spreading fast. It can even strike people who are not predisposed to it, primarily because of the influence of the modern civilization - above all, the development of technologies that diminish the amount of physical movements for people and, of course, the spread of fast-food that is a source of extra calories and a reason for multiple maladies, of which obesity is the most common one. (Leake, J. and Porter, A., 2003) Bulimia is considered nowadays an addiction, and the most widespread addiction is the addiction to sugar. As a result, more than half citizens of the USA and Canada are overweight, and though doctors warn people how harmful it is for health, there is still a flow of commercials and advertisements propagating " eating non-stop" as the best way of life.

Many doctors and dieticians believe that certain kinds of food can cause a stable addiction (chocolate, sugar, meat, and cheese) since they make our brain produce the substances that evoke the sensation of happiness: " foods which are high in fat and sugar can cause significant changes in brain biochemistry similar to those from drugs such as heroin and cocaine".

(Leake, J. and Porter, A., 2003) The phenomenon of sugar addiction evokes contradictory opinions, but the figures show that in industrially developed countries the consumption of sugar is nowadays 17 times as much as 150 years ago. (Vinberg, Mirja, 2005) In America, an average person eats around 130 pounds sugar a year (which equals to about 35 teaspoons of it a day). (Lagerquist, R.) Since human organisms are not designed to digest such huge amounts of sugar, obesity strikes more and more people.

The desire to eat sugar and sweets roots in the history of humanity. The thing is that the ancient people viewed sugar-containing food as a source of quickly produced calories; and therefore sweets helped to survive in the constantly changing conditions of the wild nature. Therefore, the human brain traditionally reacts to sugar in a very positive way; however, nowadays these extra-calories can cause obesity and shorten human life. B. Joinsson claims that if people continue this "traditional" surviving strategy, they are likely to get addicted to sugar. (Vinberg, Mirja, 2005)

The substances produced by the brain after consumption of sweets cause the state of bliss, and therefore result in sugar addiction when the human organism demands that more and more sugar is consumed. Unlike ancient people, in the modern world we eat sweets not only to neutralize our hunger, but just because we want to.

Dieticians are particularly concerned about the so-called "concealed" sugar that is added to the food and is not normally counted if we try to calculate the amount of calories eaten. This concealed sugar is contained predominantly in soft drinks and sweets, and it does not only lead to obesity directly, but it also replaces normal, healthy food in the ration. People who eat much sugar, as well as those who prefer eating junk food that does not

contain enough vegetables and fruit, obviously have a deficit of vitamins and minerals, and as a result, they start eating even more thus becoming obese.

How can obesity be cured In many countries nowadays there are special rehabilitation centres where people are cured of obesity and sugar addiction, and are taught how to keep to a healthy diet and exercise. In Great Britain the government has become very concerned about the idea of sugar addiction, and therefore there are special programmes aimed at getting industries to decrease the amount of sugar in their products and limiting people's sugar intake. (Government 'gets tough' on sugar, 2004) There is a very popular Atkins Diet (whose basis is eating no carbohydrates, but at the same time more protein), which is considered to be one of the most effective ways to cure obesity; however, some researchers claim that it can result in problems with kidneys, as well as depression (caused by the lack of serotonin), and damage of insulin system. (Brims, A., 2005)

The best way really is to keep to a " sensible, balanced diet: a large amount of fruit and vegetables, a good portion of protein and a small portion of wholemeal carbohydrates and low saturated fat". (Brims, A., 2005) Getting rid of carbohydrates is not a way out, as carbohydrates are essential for proper nutrition; however it should be remembered that there are " good" and " bad" carbohydrates, so it's better to eat the " good" ones contained in cereal, wild rice, brown rice, ancient grains, fruit, and vegetables. (Good carbs and bad carbs 2005)

Conclusion

Obesity has become a real scourge of the modern society, especially for people living in developed countries. Though sometimes it is caused by dysfunctions of certain organs of or systems of human organism, in the

majority of cases obesity is attributed to the increased consumption of calories, above all those coming with extra sugar. However, every habit can be broken, and considerable attention is paid to the psychological aspect of the change of food-behaviour. Obese people can get rid of their extra-kilos with the help of different methods, and the main element of these methods is psychological work meant to stop unhealthy eating and switch to a normal system of nutrition.

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