

HEALTH

Holistic health key to weight loss

Regina Lynch-Hudson
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According to Dr. Marcus L. Wells, more than 35 million people or approximately one-third of Americans are obese.

Wells maintains that obesity is the most preventable yet most widespread disease. He says it is a by-product of a technologically superior, state-of-the-art, sedentary society.

After years of treating patients as an internal medicine specialist, Dr. Wells noted a startling discovery: obesity was the central theme in many of his patients' illnesses.

Further research and a fellowship at the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute solidified his belief that obesity is the recurring culprit behind many illnesses and ailments.

Citing obesity as a disease that exacerbates and



Regina's
Q & A

By Regina Lynch-Hudson

intensifies other diseases and conditions, Wells deems lifestyle management as a crucial step in preventive medicine. Gout, diabetes, hypertension, and even social problems such as depression are worsened by obesity.

Though American dieters spent more than \$1.78 billion at commercial weight-loss centers in 1995, he is quick to point out that few Americans have a "Bay Watch" body.

In his new book, "Lifestyles for the 21st Century: A New Quality of Life," Dr. Wells provides a straight-forward look at how fast-track technology has

effected society.

Television, DVD players, surround sound and the Internet have replaced a lifestyle that once included hop-scotch, jump rope and adults strolling around the neighborhood. And an avalanche of fast food restaurants — yielding revenues of almost \$100 million — have metamorphosed a culture that is experiencing an obesity epidemic.

After investing many years in research and continued study in Bariatric medicine, Wells decided to pen a book that would help

America "relearn behavior." He treats obesity utilizing the philosophy that weight control results from a lifestyle and attitude change.

"It is not often that a book of this magnitude comes along that places the information available to specialty physicians and medical community members also into the hands of a layperson," said Dr. Michael Vitkin, the author's mentor and a weight loss clinic proprietor.

Wells emphasizes that we gain control of our weight when we gain control of our lives. He delves into body weight and its relation to love, culture, sex, gender and society.

In one chapter, he declares that the first step to prevent obesity is love, noting a correlation between a lack of physical stimulation and a desire to be thin, particularly in women. He says that the hoopla about self-image effects women more profoundly than men because men see their bodies as a functional machine while women view their bodies as ornamental.

Wells' central message in "Lifestyles For the 21st Century" is that we must rely on practical information and not commercialism to create a healthier image internally and externally.

"Lifestyles For the 21st Century" is an intellectual, back-to-basics book that explores the holistic notion that our outer well-being is a reflection of mental and emotional balance, combined with a healthy low-fat diet and a long-term, low-impact exercise regime.

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Surgeon general, duchess team to address obesity

WASHINGTON (AP) — Surgeon General David Satcher teamed up with the Duchess of York last week to get the fat out.

"There's no question about the fact that obesity is at an all-time high in this country," Satcher said at a national conference on obesity.

About 55 percent of American adults — 97 million people — are considered overweight or obese.

Doctors consider people obese if they weigh at least



DAVID SATCHER

20 percent more than what is recommended for their height.

"I know what it's like to be humiliated," said the former Sarah Ferguson, who once weighed 200 pounds and was dubbed "Duchess of Pork" by the British tabloids. She is now a spokeswoman for Weight Watchers.

The former wife of Britain's Prince Andrew, looking thin in a cobalt-blue suit, said she keeps her weight down by sticking to a healthy diet and spending 20 minutes on a stationary bicycle every morning.

Cancer-fighting protein promising

WASHINGTON (AP) — Researchers have found that a protein that helps regulate blood clotting can be changed into a cancer fighter that starves tumors.

The discovery adds to a growing list of proteins known to block cancer by preventing blood vessel formation.

Researchers led by Judah Folkman and Michael S. O'Reilly at Boston's Children's Hospital and Harvard Medical School found that antithrombin, a protein that controls the formation of blood clots,

changes in molecular shape to become a cancer fighter. The transformation occurs when it is cut by an enzyme that, ironically, can originate from cancer tumors.

The reshaped molecule works by blocking formation of blood vessels that would supply oxygen and nutrients to cancer cells. The action is similar to two other proteins, endostatin and angiostatin, that the Folkman-O'Reilly team found last year. Human trials of those proteins are to start soon.

The study of the new protein appears Friday in the

journal Science.

O'Reilly said he found the anticancer properties of the reshaped antithrombin molecule while studying a curious thing about small cell lung cancer.

When patients with this cancer are treated with radiation, the primary tumor is suppressed, but very often the patient then develops cancer at another site, said O'Reilly. The new cancer developed only when the first cancer was in retreat.

"It seemed that the big tumor was preventing formation of little ones," he

said.

To test this, O'Reilly put lung cancer cells under the skin above both back hips of laboratory mice.

"Whichever tumor was the first to form became the dominant tumor," he said. The dominant tumors formed bulging masses, while on the opposite hip the cancer growth was tiny, with almost no blood vessels.

This meant, said O'Reilly, that the big tumor was secreting some protein that suppressed the other tumor.

The researchers isolated (See Cancer, Page 18)

India cigarettes popular with youth

ATLANTA (AP) — Federal health officials fear that more and more youths are turning to imported high-nicotine, unfiltered cigarettes that come in flavors such as strawberry and chocolate.

A study of 642 Boston-area middle and high school students found that 40 percent had tried the thin cigarettes — called bidis or beedies — at least once and 16 percent were current bidi smokers, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said last week.

Eight percent were heavy bidi smokers, having smoked more than 100.

"We're hearing anecdotal evidence from around the country that bidis are popular with young people and are increasingly available," said Michael Eriksen, director of the CDC's Office on Smoking and Health. "We're concerned that it's becoming chic, particularly among urban minority kids."

Imported from India, bidis are filled with tobacco flakes, hand-rolled with a greenish-brown leaf, tapered at both ends and tied with a tiny, colored thread.

The cigarettes are shaped like marijuana joints and come in a variety of scents that hide the harsh taste of the tobacco. They also cost about half as much as regular cigarettes — a paper-wrapped bundle of 20 bidis can be purchased for as little as \$1.50.

Federal health officials and antismoking activists say bidis are more harmful than cigarettes. The CDC said at least one study found that bidis produce more than three times the amount of carbon monoxide and nicotine and about five times the amount of tar as cigarettes.

When asked why they chose bidis instead of regular cigarettes, 23 percent of the Massachusetts teens surveyed in March and April said they tasted better and 18 percent cited price.

Thirteen percent said they thought bidis were safer and 12 percent said they were easier to buy.

In addition to grocery and convenience stores, bidis are sold in health food stores, and that may be misleading young people, the CDC said.

"There are no warning labels like on cigarette packs. Kids say they're easier to purchase," Eriksen said.

"All the signs that teens would look for to tell them that this product is harmful aren't there the way they should be."

In May, Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., asked the Federal Trade Commission to investigate whether the cigarettes should be sold in health food stores.

The FTC already is investigating reports the cigarettes are often sold without required warning labels.



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Thursday, September 30 from 7-9 pm at
Sunrise Community Center, 2240 Linn Lane

Don't miss out, the recruitment starts in November!
For additional dates and times call 455-2564.