

Why Should I Lose Weight?

According to the National Institutes of Health, 55 percent of the U.S. population is considered overweight or obese. People who are overweight have increased risks for high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol, heart disease, stroke, gall bladder disease, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea and other breathing problems and certain cancers. Any one of these health risks can cost a person not only many dollars, but also their ability to live independently during their older years.

Being overweight is one of many health risks we can ignore with no visible threat to our health until we reach 40 to 50 years of age. Suddenly, you might find your blood pressure or blood sugar is high at a health fair or during a routine health check up. The first thing most health care professionals will tell you is lose weight and increase your physical activity.

Can losing weight and increased physical activity really have an effect on problems like blood pressure, blood sugar, and heart disease? The answer is clearly, yes!

Many studies have shown that losing even 10 pounds can have a positive effect on problems such as high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, and the other problems listed above. However, losing weight is not easy. Many people say, “Well, I will just take pills for these problems — that is a whole lot easier.” Ask anyone taking medications on a regular basis about the ease and cost of medicines — they most likely will say medications require a lot of effort and money.

Losing weight and increasing physical activity are easier with support from other people trying to achieve the same results. Walk Across Texas is a way to increase your physical activity with group support. About 6,000 people participated last year for eight weeks. This year we have added a weight loss program. You may choose to participate in either one or both. Call your county Extension agent at _____ to sign up.

Whether you want to increase physical activity or lose weight or do both, before calling, please check with your health care provider, and never change the dose of any of your medicines without your doctor’s advice. Taking action now could have an important impact on the quality of your life now and in later years.