

Obesity and Cancer

Obesity has long been associated with health concerns such as coronary heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension. Now added to this list is a disease feared and dreaded most, cancer.

Recent studies have shown that there is a direct correlation between excessive weight and the likelihood of developing certain types of cancer. Breast, prostate, colon, endometrial, cervical, ovarian and gall bladder cancers are most frequently connected to obesity.

The consensus is that obesity alters the interplay of diet, metabolism, physical activity, hormones, and growth factors. These factors are important in protecting the body against cell mutation.

According to the American Cancer society (ACS), 2% of all cancer deaths are tied in with excessive weight. More striking is that more than one-third of all cancer related deaths are connected to adult dietary habits.

Maintaining a proper diet and nutrition is vital to protecting the body against cancer. Studies have indicated that 35 percent of all cancers are related to nutritional factors. Diets high in saturated and unsaturated fats are known to play a key role in colon, rectal, prostate, testes, breast, uterine and gallbladder cancers.

Researchers believe that fat alters the way the body uses glucose and produces insulin. Excessive amounts of fat induce the pancreas to release additional insulin, which in turn supports tumor growth.

Excessive fat has also been determined to influence the effects of estrogen, thereby heightening the potential for breast, prostate and uterine cancer.

Therefore, maintaining a healthy diet and weight is imperative to supporting the body's defenses against cancer.

An important step is to strive for a diet that is at least two-thirds fruit and vegetables. This will help to fortify the body with the antioxidants, anticarcinogens and bioflavonoids necessary to impede tumor growth.

Physical exercise should also be incorporated into a regular routine.

Current statistics show that we are a nation with an expanding waistline. Over 50% of all Americans are deemed overweight. The rates of obesity among adolescents are also climbing. A more sedentary approach to recreation, coupled with a high calorie intake, is often the attributed culprit.

We spend more time sitting in front of "the tube" both television and computer and less time engaged in physical sport or work. Fast foods and snacking has contributed to our high fat, low nutrition diets.

This unfortunate demise of healthy lifestyles has lead to an increase in the number of obesity-related cancer deaths.