

A BRIT ON THE **LARGE** SIDE

“Fatties cause global warming,” claims *The Sun* newspaper, which reported that scientists have warned the increase in ‘big-eaters’ fuels the need for more food production. It also suggests that obese people are more likely to drive and both these factors raise greenhouse gas emissions.



APART FROM DAMAGING the environment, obesity can cause you to die up to 10 years early, according to the largest investigation into how obesity affects mortality, reported in *The Guardian*.

Obesity is a serious medical condition and is the heavy accumulation of fat in your body to such a degree that it rapidly increases your risk of diseases. It isn't surprising to find that over-eating and a lack of daily physical activity are the causes.

Physical problems associated with obesity are difficulties breathing, sleeping, walking or running, increased sweating, pain in the knees and back and skin conditions such as acne. Obesity also commonly causes psychological problems as being overweight can affect your body image and damage self-esteem. More serious

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medical problems are also more common in obese people than those of normal weight and include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diseases related to hardening of the arteries (such as heart attack and stroke), type two diabetes and some types of cancer.

LIFESTYLE

With the cause and remedy seemingly so straight forward, why are so many people becoming obese? Almost one in four adults in the UK are currently obese and if trends continue as they are, it's predicted that this figure will rise to nine out of ten by 2050.

There are certainly lifestyle changes that are linked to more people becoming obese. Because people are generally less active than they were in the past, and because fatty and sugary foods are so widely available, it's very easy to put on weight. Some doctors think it would make a difference if unhealthy foods were more clearly labelled, fast-food adverts aimed at children banned and some suggest that foods such as chocolate should be taxed. Other important factors include changing perceptions of what constitutes a healthy portion size and people spending more time inactive in front of computers/television.

If you're obese, it means you're eating more calories than your body is using up as energy. Your body stores the extra calories as fat. By eating less than your body needs and exercising more, you force your body to use its existing fat stores for energy and will therefore lose weight.

Some medical conditions can make you more likely to put on weight. But you can only become obese by eating more calories than your body uses.

HOW TO KNOW IF YOU'RE OVERWEIGHT

Comparing yourself to those around you isn't necessarily a helpful way to assess your own weight as obesity is becoming more common and what may seem the average may in fact be too heavy. To get an accurate idea of whether you're a healthy weight you can check your body size using the body mass index (BMI). Your BMI is a single number that's worked out from your height and weight.

Your waist measurement is also another method and is now believed to be a much more accurate measure of future health risk

than BMI alone. Carrying too much fat around your middle is associated with an increased risk of developing heart disease and diabetes. A waist circumference greater than 32 inches for women and 37 inches for men increases the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

WHAT TO DO

Quite simply, reducing the amount of calories you eat and drink and increasing the amount of physical activity you do will make you lose weight.

But to lose weight and keep it off requires you to make permanent changes to your food intake and physical activity. Four basic principles to keep in mind are:

Reduce the amount of calories you consume

Reduce high-fat foods in your diet, choose lower or fat-reduced options, use cooking oil and spreads such as butter sparingly and remove excess fat from meat. Maintain a balanced diet by switching from refined to wholemeal products for bread rice and pasta. Fruit and vegetables should make up about a third of your daily diet and a person should eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables each day.

Exercise

Experts now say that a healthy person should do gentle exercise for at least half an hour each day. This doesn't have to mean sweating it out in a gym but should be enough to raise your heart rate slightly for a sustained period.

Smaller portions of food

Portion sizes have increased over the years, which means we're consuming extra calories than we may need. As our bodies have become accustomed to eating bigger portions we don't necessarily feel any fuller.

Watch what you drink

Alcohol and sugary drinks are high in calories and add extra calories to your diet. Present advice on safe drinking is no more than two units of alcohol per day for women and no more than three units per day for men (1 unit approximate to half a pint (250ml) of average strength beer or a 125ml glass of wine 8% ABV) with at least two drink-free days a week.



Information provided for general information only, and should not be treated as a substitute for the medical advice of a doctor.



FOR MANY PEOPLE working in Hong Kong, computer-based jobs have taken the physical element out of work and long working hours mean that exercise is the last thing on people's minds when they get home.

But the close proximity to so many good gyms in residential and working areas in Hong Kong should mean that anyone can make time to fit in some regular exercise.

The fitness industry has changed tremendously over the last decade and gyms can be a good place to exercise on overall aerobic fitness and build muscle strength. Unlike gyms of the past, which many saw as intimidating and full of Arnold Schwarzenegger types, today's Hong Kong gyms offer much broader facilities, enjoyable group classes and even your own personal trainer.

Wherever you live in Hong Kong, there are sure to be modern gym facilities within reach and, with so many on offer, there are plenty of deals to pick from.

SEASONS FITNESS

Seasons Fitness is conveniently located on the leafy fringes of Central and their 10,000 square foot gym enjoys a stunning view over Hong Kong Park and the CBD.

Their premises have recently undergone an extensive 15 million dollar renovation to offer the latest equipment in a warm relaxing resort style environment and their professionally trained staff are always on hand to help you reach your fitness goals. Female members can enjoy the privacy and seclusion of their spacious Ladies Only fitness area.

In addition to their high tech gym, they offer a 20-metre indoor heated resort style pool for year round swimming, saunas, steam rooms and eight room day spas for both men and women. Seasons is also fitted with two dedicated exercise studios for group exercise sessions.

Further information www.seasonsfitness.com

CALIFORNIA FITNESS

Part of 24 Hour Fitness Worldwide, has ten gyms in Hong Kong at Central, Wan Chai, Causeway Bay, Quarry Bay, Megabox Kowloon Bay, Whampoa Garden, Mongkok, Mongkok Pakpolee, Tsim Sha Tsui and Tuen Mun.

Their clubs are fitted out with world-class exercise equipment, steam rooms and saunas, group exercise studios and have a diverse range of classes. They've also got personal trainers on hand who are all internationally certified.

Further information www.californiafitness.com

PURE FITNESS

Pure Fitness is one of Hong Kong's leading health & fitness facilities. Pure have two centres on Hong Kong island at Two ifc and Hollywood Road in the heart of Central, and one at Langham Place in Kowloon, Pure Fitness boasts state-of-the-art equipment, dedicated studios for free weights, cycling, boxing, climbing and aerobics, plus a diverse schedule of classes including bodypump, kick-boxing and yoga.

Pure Fitness offer over 250 group exercise classes including BodyPump, Body Combat, Capoeira, Spinning, Boxing Circuit, and dance-inspired sessions are led by professional and qualified instructors each week. In addition, Pure has an international team of NASM-certified personal trainers that offer clients the latest industry insight towards maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Further information www.pure-fit.com

MARRIOTT HEALTH CLUB

Marriott Sky City Health Club is situated at Hong Kong International Airport and convenient for those living on Lantau Island's Tung Chung or Discovery Bay. It offers a full range of facilities including a 27-metre indoor pool, 24-hour gymnasium, sauna and steam room, jacuzzi and value-added service from their Quan Spa.

Further information www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/hkgap-hong-kong-skycity-marriott-hotel/



Above and below: Marriott Sky City Health Club

