

# **Being Overweight Really Is that Bad for Your Heart Health**

So I have your attention for a little bit. From that fact I assume we both have a common suspicion. We both suspect that there is a serious health problem with being overweight. OK. So most people suspect that. Very true. But sadly most people will not spend five minutes this week thinking about it. We will. And we will begin our thinking with...

## **The Problem of Gaining Weight**

### **We Don't Really Like What We Have Become**

None of us like it. No one enjoys the feeling of putting on clothing that used to fit. And the mirrors that used to be our servants have become our accusers. For some of us it means an endless cycle of resolutions to lose weight before summer or in preparation for a reunion with friends. Some of us have just given up. We reluctantly accept the belief that we are overweight and we always will be.

We don't like the way we look. We suspect people are staring at us – even judging us – for what appears to be mismanagement on our part. We feel bad about the way we look. And we feel bad about who we are.



Being overweight affects more than the way we feel about ourselves. It affects the way we feel in general. As we gain weight – perhaps very slowly at times – there is a corresponding reduction of energy. And not only for people who are older. Extra weight at any age has the inevitable result of sapping our energy. We move slower and with more effort. We tire easily and eventually give up health-beneficial activities that we once enjoyed.

There are other things that begin to happen. Our joints begin to hurt. So we are reluctant to exercise. And - if you are like me - when you do try to exercise, you often overdo it, straining your joints and muscles by asking them to do something they are no longer prepared to do. And the resulting injuries provide even more incentive to give up.

**It is a frustrating and horrible cycle that we do not need to accept.**

For far too many people it is no longer a cycle. It has degenerated into a downward trend. They have given up. They think there is no hope for them. They have fallen too far. They have reached a breaking point and have passed the point of no return.

Maybe - be honest - this is you. Perhaps you have simply given up. You have tried spurts of diets and exercise... far too many times. You have looked into the mirror over and over again and have seen what you believe is your inevitable end. You have settled for rearranging your clothes to de-emphasize the changes in your body. And you have long stopped stepping on the scale.

Your energy is gone. Your sleep patterns are terrible. Your joints bother you constantly. You get out of breath performing common tasks. And for the most part, you feel miserable.

You are not alone. Millions of people are over weight. Recent estimates show that more than 70% of American adults are overweight. And more than half of these are considered obese.

But to me the more frightening statistic is that nearly 20% of American children - that includes ages 2 to 19 - are obese. Not overweight. They are obese.



## **Obesity is on The Rise**

It is getting worse. For decades the health conscious professionals have preached low fat diets. It became more than a trend. It became an obsession. Food packaging still uses bold letters to advertise that the product is low fat. Everyone knows that foods that are low in fat are good for us. (Or so the mantra goes).

But the same labels hide in the small print a plethora of life damaging ingredients that have become the mainstay of many diets.

The point being made is not that fat is or is not the cause of obesity. The subject is much more complicated than that. The point is... in spite of decades of health preaching... in spite of all the fad diets, low fat foods, and expert advice... obesity is on the rise.

***What we have done has not worked.***

## **Chronic Disease is on The Rise As Well**

Being overweight, tired, and frustrated is bad enough. But these are not the biggest problems that we face with current trends. In spite of so many attempts to reduce diabetes, cancer, and heart disease over the years, we have actually seen increases in each of these chronic conditions.

Let's use the fat-free craze as an example. The belief that all saturated fats are tied to heart disease, led to a single-focused solution. That is... take the saturated fats out of our diets and we should expect that our blood cholesterol levels would fall. Reduced levels of blood cholesterol should result in cleaner arteries and therefore less heart disease.

So we reduced our fat intake. In its place we consumed – without much thought – more sugar and other highly processed simple carbohydrates, more partially hydrogenated oils (high in trans-fats), genetically altered

grains, and long lists of ingredients that we can't even pronounce. But hey... the label said it is fat-free. It must be good for us.

In the United States, for example, despite the reduction in consumption of fat from approximately 40% of calories in 1965 to 34% of calories in 1991, a decrease in incidence of obesity has not occurred.

The fat-free craze did not make us thinner. And it did not lower our risk of chronic disease. Heart disease is more prevalent today than it was 30 years ago when many of us jumped on the fat-free bandwagon. The solution to better heart health is just not that simple. The solution involves lifetime habit changes. And for that we need coaching.

## **Doesn't Everyone Know That Being Overweight is Unhealthy?**

This short article cannot begin to tackle the life-style changes with which a health coach can help you. Rather we are trying to establish the effects that being overweight has on your health.

But everyone knows that being overweight is bad for our health. Why do we need to read another document to convince us?

In the first place it is not immediately evident that everyone knows how bad obesity is for us. Either people don't believe it, or they don't care, or they don't know what to do about it. Or perhaps they don't care enough to do what it takes to deal with it.

One or more of these options must be true. For the simple fact is more and more people are overweight and the incidence of chronic disease continues to increase.

It is my hope that more people will realize just how serious being overweight is, and... that they really can do something about it. Let me

repeat that by breaking it up into two separate thoughts. Maybe the slow down will help it sink in.

***Being overweight has serious health consequences. And even small changes in your weight can have significant effects.***

***And... there really is something you can do about it. Excluding abnormal medical conditions (and don't be too quick to claim this excuse) there is a near 100% chance that you can lose weight and keep it off. But you will need coaching.***

## **Chronic Disease is Closely Connected to Being Overweight**

We have long believed that being heavy has negative affects on our health. But we also believe that smoking is bad for us (it really is very bad for us), yet millions of people still smoke.

Science has for many years preached that we should lose weight to be healthier. But recent studies show that obesity has an even bigger affect on our health than we previously thought.

For example, 1998 US federal guidelines stated that overweight people must have at least two risk factors for obesity related health problems in order to be concerned about losing weight.



Now those guidelines have changed. The current recommendation is that just one heart health risk factor – along with being overweight – is significant enough to take weight loss seriously.

Examples of risk factors are high blood pressure or high triglycerides.

If stating guidelines like this is too subtle to influence the average reader let's state it another way...

According to a new cardiovascular prevention guideline that was released by The American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology:

***Obesity should be managed and treated like a disease.***

Donna Ryan, M.D., co-chair of the committee that wrote the guideline and professor emeritus at Louisiana State University's Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge said...

***The key message here is that we know weight loss isn't just about will power, it's about behaviors around food and physical activity, and getting the help you need to change those behaviors.***

For people who are overweight or obese, it is no longer a question of should they lose weight. It is simply a question of how.

### **The Connection is Clear Enough**

There is no lack of scientific evidence that being overweight increases one's incidence of high blood lipids, (triglycerides and LDL cholesterol), high blood pressure, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, enlarged left ventricle, heart failure, and some cancers.

Previously many scientists considered the relation between obesity and coronary heart disease as indirect. But recent evidence implies that the relation is not so indirect.

***In a 14-year prospective study, middle-aged women with a BMI (body mass index) greater than 23 but less than 25 had a 50% increase in risk of nonfatal or fatal coronary heart disease. Men between the ages of 40 and 65 with a BMI greater than 25 but less than 29 had a 72% increased risk.***

These are significant numbers. But unfortunately statistics are not enough to convince many people. The evidence may be clear. But many

people just are not willing to act or are not sure what to do. More on this a little later.

## **The Effect of Obesity on Heart Function**

The relationship between heart function and weight increase is varied and complicated. Obesity is intertwined with a number of health conditions that underlie cardiovascular disease. Carrying too much weight can add strain directly to the heart and impair heart function. Further lifestyle choices that cause us to gain weight also affect other heart health risk factors.

The important thing to note, though, is carrying too much weight can have significant negative effects on your heart health.

Most of us – when we see a heavy person – instinctively think that they are more prone to heart trouble. Scientists think the same thing and rely on studies to back up their thinking.

One study considered 950 older adults in evaluating left ventricular diastolic dysfunction. LV diastolic dysfunction measures how well the left ventricle refills between beats. The greater the dysfunction the more likely a person is to experience future heart failure.

The study placed each person in one of three groups as determined by their body mass index (BMI) A BMI below 25 was considered normal. A BMI between 25 and 29.9 was considered overweight. And a BMI of 30 or more was considered obese.

The results – as we might suspect – showed that overweight and obese participants had a higher rate of abnormal diastolic function. Those participants who also had other heart health risk factors also showed a higher level of diastolic dysfunction.

*On average the study showed that a one point increase in BMI related to a 4% increase in LV diastolic dysfunction.*

Similar studies have shown that moderately overweight women are twice as likely to develop coronary heart disease as thin women. For women with a BMI over 29 the risk almost quadruples. For moderately overweight men the risk increases about 70% as compared to thinner men.

A person's BMI is not a perfect predictor of heart health risks. For example a muscular person could have a higher BMI even with a low fat content. But innumerable heart health risk studies have been done using the BMI as a measuring rod. And for most of us (non-professional athletes) it is a pretty good standard to use.

The numbers may vary for different risks including non-heart related risks. But the overwhelming evidence is that being overweight poses huge health risks. And most of us are ignoring these risks.

## **There Are Plenty of Statistics**



Let's face it. We all know being overweight is bad news. It is the 900-pound gorilla in the room. We all know it is true. It is there for us all to see but we would rather act as if it is not there.

Some of us have lived with obesity all our lives. But others were thin when they were younger. Many were even star athletes with hardly a trace of body fat. But for almost all of us things have changed. We have aged. And with aging come a number of challenges. But it is not only the phenomenon of aging that has made all the difference. Our lives have changed... our habits have changed... our environments have changed... our values have changed.

It is possible to quote statistics and studies for hundreds or thousands of pages. But with each page our mental numbness would increase until we simply stopped reading. And we would be no more convinced of the problem than when we started reading.

Why? Why is it that all of us suspect being overweight potentially causes a vast number of problems while not offering a single substantial benefit - Not one that I can think of - and why do we do little about it?

Why do we do it? Because we like being overweight? Because we think we don't have a choice? Because we are so comfortable with our current lifestyles that any risk is better than stepping out of our comfort zone? And let's face it... the zone of being overweight is not all that comfortable.

I suppose there are many reasons. For me they include...

- 1) The fact that I was thin for years and the weight sort of just sneaked up on me.
- 2) The related fact that fat has replaced muscle so it was not as noticeable for a while.
- 3) That I was so busy holding life together as the kids were born and have grown that I relegated little time to thinking about it.
- 4) That exercise is not as easy as it used to be.
- 5) That I used to consume calories to build muscle, but as my activities changed my eating habits did not adjust.
- 6) That for a long time I didn't think the added weight really put me at much risk.

There are other reasons, many of them. Yours may be different. Perhaps reading this is just your first step in realizing that you or someone close to you is not as healthy as possible.

So I am not going to quote any more studies or statistics. A couple hours scouring the Internet should be sufficient to satisfy you that being overweight is a problem that has to be dealt with.

There are many reasons most of us do not deal with the issue of weight gain. Which brings me to our second point. And that is...

## The Problem of Losing Weight

We already knew there are problems with gaining weight. But there is also one big problem with losing weight. And that is...

*It is difficult.*

That's it. That is the biggest problem with losing weight. It is not easy.

Before we move on, stop and think for a moment... is that one reason sufficient? Given all that we have discussed and the copious other things you may have considered that are disconcerting about being overweight... is the difficulty of losing weight a sufficient enough reason to do nothing about it?

*You have to answer that question for yourself.*

Any time we talk about losing weight the subject of dieting comes to the forefront. A number of things come to mind when we think about dieting. Technically our diet is simply what we eat. But the verb '*dieting*' has a whole different connotation.



Dieting is unpleasant and frustrating. Often people have some limited success at first (some never do) but the overall experience is one of failure. For many of us the resolution to 'make it this time' ends up the

same way all our other attempts ended... with disappointment. So we assume it is a lost cause – or at least not worth the effort – and we accept our fate.

But if our diet is simply what we eat, and what we eat affects our weight, then...

## **Why Do Most Diets Fail?**

There are a number of factors that affect weight gain including our genetic makeup, age, stress, sleep habits, and how active we are. But our diet is a big factor. So it is worth a few moments to consider why most diets fail.

### **Diet Alone**

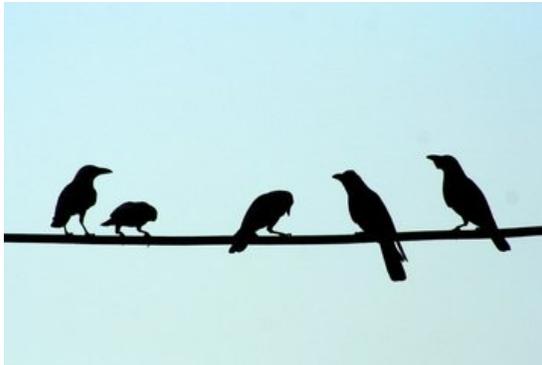
Many attempts at losing weight focus only on dieting without consideration of other influencing factors such as exercise. Many diet plans will try to appeal to the consumer by advertising that so-and-so (often a celebrity) lost so many pounds without exercise. Of course the follow-up advertisements don't show how much the celebrity gained back six months later. But I digress.

Exercise is essential, not only for weight loss, but for overall health. If our bodies are burning less calories than we are taking in, losing weight is going to be difficult. Also, exercise changes the rate at which our bodies burn calories, and not only while we are actively exercising. Further, a muscular body burns more calories than a body with a high fat content.

The mention of exercise strikes a nerve almost as tender as the mention of dieting. The average high school student participating in three sports does not live the life most of us do. And for those of us who were very active in sports when younger are surprised at how difficult exercise can be when we try to start a new exercise routine.

The important thing to note here is that exercise is essential to health and to weight loss. It must be a part of a holistic approach to weight management and optimal health. Whatever your current level of activity is, your personal trainer or health coach can help you integrate exercise into your overall health plan.

### **Birds of a Feather**



The New England Journal of Medicine published a study in 2007 suggesting that those who surround themselves with overweight or obese family and friends are more likely to be overweight or obese

themselves. The study further suggested that people tend to evaluate what 'normal' is regarding a person's weight and eating habits in relation to how their peers judge. Unfortunately it is no simple matter to change the people with whom we spend time.

However, the study does make a valid point. We are greatly influenced by our colleagues. Our friends and family can be a great comfort to us. But they can also define what is acceptable.

So look around and see if this situation defines you. If it does, being aware of it may motivate you to find a couple of friends who are already doing the things you want to see as a part of your life. Another option is to form a team from your current friends and make a pact to work together to introduce changes in your individual lives while being accountable to each other.

### **Drastic Changes**

Crash diets can be harmful and set you up for failure. In the first place they leave you too weak to have any willpower. We do not function well

– or make good decisions – when we are weak from hunger. And the constant cravings will eventually make us violate our commitment to the diet.

From a nutritional perspective, it is not healthy to deprive your body of needed fuel. Such diets expose us to ill health and should be avoided. Being constantly hungry is not a necessary component of a healthy weight loss diet.



Much of our hunger and over eating is affected by hormones and brain chemistry that are maladjusted - possibly from poor dieting attempts. Starving ourselves can actually create an imbalance that makes our bodies

crave more food than we need.

Proper weight loss is about more than calories. The amount we eat is important. But what we eat and how often we eat are very important factors as well. Eating too little food has a negative affect on the way your body stores and burns calories.

You no doubt know people that are very over weight but they say they eat very little. They may not be lying. Eating too little food causes the body to store fat, not burn it. Constant, drastic dieting can result in more weight gain by damaging the metabolism. Instead of starving, a proper approach to weight loss is to gently place the body in a fat burning mode. Crash dieting does just the opposite.

### **Many Diets Promote the Wrong Foods**

Not all foods affect our weight the same way. A calorie is a measure of energy. But calories in different foods are treated differently by our

bodies. The calories in some foods tend to make us fatter. Others make us thinner.

For example, foods that cause insulin spikes tend to cause more calories to be stored as fat. During the fat-free craze people avoided fats but consumed more simple carbohydrates – especially processed sugar. Instead of losing weight, many people got fatter and increased their risk of contracting chronic disease.

Foods with high glycemic values cause insulin levels to fluctuate greatly. Your body acts as if you are starving it and stores, instead of burns, the calories. What you feel is more hungry (because you are starving). Your metabolism slows down to conserve calories and you crave more.

So commercials that motivate us to grab that candy bar to stave off hunger are telling us exactly the opposite of what happens. Sure, we feel full at first but are soon hungry again and reach for more sweets that the body stores as fat in fear that we are starving.

Artificial sweeteners... how about those? Don't let the advertising fool you. They trigger sweet receptors increasing hunger. And they slow metabolism leading to obesity and type 2 diabetes. So-called diet drinks may be lower in calories but they are not good for losing weight – or for anything.

### **Metabolism Slow Down**

Though already mentioned, this point needs more attention. As we age our metabolism slows down. But it is important that we do not use this inevitable slowdown as an excuse for not losing weight.

If you are past 30 then you have no doubt experienced this slowdown. Thirty is not a magic number. For some the noticeable change comes later. But it does come.

Not all metabolism slowing is a natural product of maturing. Exercise also becomes more difficult as time goes on. Partly because our bodies are less capable of high intensity exercise. But, for many of us, the real culprit is we simply get too busy to spend time exercising. When we try to return we find it difficult because we are out of shape and too impatient to work through the adjustment. Less exercise tends to cause a lowering of metabolism. A lower metabolism burns less calories and stores more.

As mentioned above, dieting itself can damage the metabolism. Depriving the body of food makes it more efficient in storing it. It is like hibernation. The body slows the metabolism to conserve for the future. We have less energy and are carrying around more fat. So we move less.

Dieters who are on and off diets – restricting their intake for a while then giving up and indulging themselves – negatively impact their metabolism. They feel overweight and resolve to lose the extra pounds. They cut food consumption signaling their bodies to conserve. They see little to no results from dieting and fall back to their normal eating habits. But their metabolism does not completely readjust. They gain even more weight and resolve again to lose it. The cycle continues and even worsens.

Adjusting our diet can positively affect our metabolism. But counting calories alone will not do it.

There are other reasons diets fail. But we are only going to discuss one more. And that is...

### **Most Diets Are Temporary**

Dieters often set goals like losing a few pounds for the summer or for a trip or for a reunion. The diet is designed to last until the goal is accomplished. We diet to prepare for an event. The event arrives. We return to previous habits.

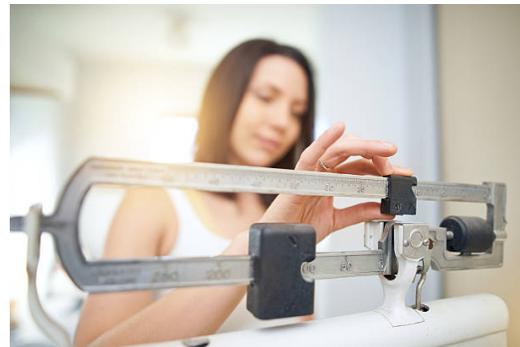
At one level this isn't bad. If the goal is to reach a certain weight, and then adjust our approach to maintain that weight, then the goal may be fine. But if the diet is a temporary fix, it is likely to fail.

Instead of your goal being weight loss you should think of it more like weight (or even better, health) management. Loss implies a temporary goal. Management is long-term. Managing your weight and health is a life long goal that should involve a life long strategy.

This long-term strategy is missing from most failed dieting attempts. By adjusting your thinking your weight management efforts will help you...

## Succeed with Health Management

Success in managing your weight - and consequently improving your heart health - is not holding on for dear life to an intense food deprivation program. A better approach is to change your life a few small habits at a time. You want to



slowly change the way your body stores and burns calories. You want to teach your body to use up current calories to produce energy because it has *learned* that more calories are coming in a short time.

Slow change does not have to require months and years. Significant weight loss – and subsequent management - can occur in weeks. But it should last for years. The important thing is to know...

- 1) How to affect your body's utilization of fuel.
- 2) What types of fuel are best for you.
- 3) When to fuel your body.
- 4) How to alter your cravings or tastes.
- 5) How to build small life-long habits

## **Changing the Way Your Body Uses Fuel.**

We hinted above that our bodies do not use all foods the same way. Foods with a high glycemic value cause insulin fluctuations and are more prone to be stored as fat rather than burned as fuel. Storing calories not only causes you to gain weight, but you have less energy to function.

The how and when of eating is also important. The same food eaten in large quantities as one or two meals is used by your body differently than meals spread out through the day.

## **Know what foods to eat.**

Not all people react the same to food. There are, of course, food allergies to consider. Some people have violent reactions to certain foods and must avoid them. But there are also less obvious reactions to food that can harm your health in subtle ways that are not immediately evident.

Closely related to this are food addictions. Everyone knows that some drugs can be addictive to the point where the body strongly craves the very drug that is actually destroying it. Food addictions do the same thing. For example sugar can become addictive. As we consume more and more sugar our cravings increase for additional sugar. Studies have shown that sugar is a major contributor to systemic inflammation. So in addition to getting fatter we are also putting ourselves at increase risk for chronic diseases like cancer, diabetes, and heart disease.

## **Know when to fuel the body**

As mentioned, the when – and frequency – of eating is important. Eating too little one meal a day is not healthy. In addition to restricting your body to nutrients it needs for proper function and healing... it does not work. This type of dieter often finds it difficult to lose weight and may actually continue to gain.

## **Know that you can adjust your cravings**

Most cravings are not naturally a part of our makeup. They are the result of our habits. Simply put, you crave what you eat. You can weaken current cravings and strengthen new ones. Studies have shown that this can happen rather quickly, in just a few days.

## **Know how to build life-long habits**

Weight – and health – management is not about temporary hard-core attempts. It is about building habits that will stay with you over the long haul. Knowing how to diet for a month has very limited potential. But changing your lifestyle one habit at a time can actually transform your life.

Our culture did not get progressively overweight because of genetic changes. We are heavier today because we have altered our food, we are eating different food, we are eating more than we need, and we are more sedentary. These factors are the result of habits. Reversing the trend of bad habits in your life can bring about marvelous results. All you need is a little determination and some guidance.

## **Finding Guidance**

The determination will have to come from you. You might find it a little easier to be determined if you have a partner to work with. Who else in your life would be willing to walk with you through a transformation of your life? A friend with the same goals can be a solid strength.

### ***What about guidance?***

There is not a one size fits all solution to weight loss and better heart health. We may share a common problem... weight gain. But we have

different goals. Some may need to lose 10 or 15 pounds. Others may need to lose 100 or more. Both groups can be successful. Many people have successfully lost over 100 pounds – not in years – but in months. And they keep it off. How? By changing a few habits and making new ones.



A **health coach** is an expert who can be your best guide in the journey. A health coach can lay a path for changing those old habits into new life long habits that can help you balance your life in ways

that you might not even have known is possible for you.

A balanced life goes far beyond weight loss. It might begin with exploring your physical health. But that is just the foundation to help your mental and financial health as well.

Dr. Wayne Anderson has developed a phrase that describes the process of trading in those old habits. That phrase is...

***STOP, CHALLENGE, CHOOSE.***

That little phrase has help many thousands of people change their orientation making them more conscious of the choices they are making. It goes something like this...

You are at a party and there are all types of tempting foods that you have determined are not good for your goals. But out of habit your hand reaches for some unhealthy temptation. You may have told yourself you wouldn't do it, but you do.

It is an automatic response that you are accustomed to making in this type of situation. You will feel guilty about it later. But you do it. The guilt won't last so you are likely to do it the next time as well.

Appetites call out for immediate gratification. And they usually get it – especially when we think the impact will be small. We don't think of our overall goals for health and balance in situations like this. We just react the way habits have told us to act.

So the first step in the phrase is simply to **STOP**. Instead of allowing your instincts to manipulate your actions let a pause enter in. Just stop and think for a moment. Give yourself a moment to be self-aware... to reflect on your long-term goals. The stop gives you just a moment to make mindful decisions instead of simply reacting.



That stop also gives you the opportunity to **CHALLENGE** what you are about to do. The challenge brings your long-term goals into the situation. What are you hoping to gain? What is your vision? What goal is at the end of your efforts? Does the automatic reaction that you want to take bring you to your destination? Or is it a roadblock?

The challenge helps you make an informed choice based on the steps you have laid out to achieve your goals.

Now that you are in the position to challenge it is time to **CHOOSE**. So now choose. You have evaluated the benefit of eating that morsel. And you have evaluated what negative impact it might have on your goals. So choose!

It sounds simple enough. But there are a few factors that cannot be left out.

First... you have to know what your goals are. They have to be clearly laid out before you. And this is so difficult for most of us. We don't know what our goals are.

The fact that you took the time to search the Internet and download this document and then are taking the time to read it may indicate that you at least have some idea what your goals are.

Most of us stay too busy to consider clearly what our goals should be. We are working hard to accomplish goals we haven't even defined. We are mostly surviving. But perhaps your goals – at least generally – are taking shape. You want better heart health. You want to reduce your risk of chronic disease. You want to lose weight so you look and feel better.

From here you may develop more specific, quantifiable goals. Perhaps you want to lose 75 pounds. Or you want to get down to a certain size. Or you want to reduce your blood pressure. Maybe you want to feel better so you can work to improve your family life or improve your financial situation.

In addition to having fuzzy goals we also don't know the steps we should take. Of course if our goals are unclear how could we possibly know what to do?

But even when we do define our goals, do we know how to get there? You want to lose eighty pounds? What do you do next? What steps do you take to get there? The **CHALLENGE** can't work without clear steps to accomplish our goals.

So defining your goals and establishing the steps to get there are essential. Thirdly it helps to have a community. If you have friends who are willing to swim against the stream with you, who have the same goals and steps as you do... then you really have something.

That is all part of what health coaching is. A coach can help you define your goals and establish the steps to get you there. And a coach is also

part of your community. A coach does more than direct, he or she comes along side you as a reinforcement helping you to run the course.

To read more about how a health coach can help you get where you want to be, click the link below.

<http://www.optimal-heart-health.com/HealthCoaching.html>

## Wrapping Up

You probably already knew that being overweight is terribly bad for your heart health. It is also a factor in many other chronic diseases. I hope we have reinforced that enough in this short essay to help you take that next step... to resolve to make changes. The cost may seem high at first. You will be forced out of your comfort zone. But remember we are changing one habit at a time to living better.

Besides, nobody likes being overweight. Life is just harder that way. Losing the weight is more than worth the effort.

I hope also that we have impressed upon you that, though many diets fail, you have a very high probability of success if you have the right tools and support. People really do lose that much weight. And they keep it off. But they are part of the right process and are determined to follow through.

Don't shrug it off. Perhaps now is a great opportunity to stop and think about that tendency to read something and do nothing about it. Maybe you could challenge the assumption that you can't do it, or that it isn't worth the effort. Perhaps it is time to choose.