

FITNESS TIPS

In The War On Obesity, Balance Is A Winning Strategy

(NAPSA)—Americans are constantly searching for the “magic diet” that will help them lose weight fast with the least amount of work—and often overlook proven strategies for healthy living.

Fitness and nutrition publications feed the “magic diet” craze by continually touting new and different diets or a new “evil food” to eliminate from the diet. The latest target in this never-ending quest is high fructose corn syrup (HFCS), a sweetener found in a variety of food products.

Some “obesity pundits” have come to blame HFCS as the cause for the rise in obesity and diabetes observed over the last 30 years.

Is HFCS to blame for America’s obesity epidemic? No, say the experts.

Media stories that “link” consumption of HFCS to the rise in obesity are without scientific merit and only serve to trigger alarmist reactions.

The truth is America’s obesity epidemic has been caused by multiple factors, including an increase in the daily consumption of calories, combined with a decrease in the daily amount of physical activity in which Americans engage.

“There is a growing consensus among nutrition and fitness experts that small changes in one’s diet and physical activity can achieve real results for better health,” said Susan Finn, Ph.D., RD, LD, FADA, chair of the American Council for Fitness and Nutrition.

Between 1977 and 1995, individual caloric intake increased by almost 200 calories per day, from



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1,876 calories to 2,043 calories. Theoretically, consuming an extra 100 calories a day for a year can lead to a gain of 10 pounds.

At the same time Americans are consuming more calories, they have become physically inactive. According to the President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, nearly half (four in 10) of all American adults engage in no daily physical activity.

Only about one-half of U.S. young people (ages 12-21 years) regularly participate in vigorous physical activity, and one-fourth reported no vigorous physical activity at all. On the flip side, one-quarter of U.S. children spend four hours or more watching television daily.

The key word, experts say, is “balance.” The best way for Americans to combat obesity is to substantially increase physical activity while enjoying balanced diets and moderate consumption of all foods and beverages.