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Obesity and Health

The numbers are in – and they aren't pretty! One in four adult Canadians and one in ten children are clinically obese according to the Canadian Obesity Network – that's six million Canadians.

Obesity is becoming the highest factor in the incidence of cardiovascular disease. It has already advanced over high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes and now it is overtaking smoking to be the top modifiable risk factor in Canada. Researchers emphasize the importance of limiting alcohol and fat consumption, increasing vegetables and fruit and getting moving.

Belly Fat Matters

While being overweight or obese has been associated with cardiovascular disease (and a number of other conditions), a 7-year study out of Texas has specifically found a correlation between abdominal fat and the development of high blood pressure. Abdominal fat had the highest independent association – greater than both body mass index (BMI) and subcutaneous fat percentage.

More on Diets

The debate rages on over the relative merits of low fat or low carb diets. The pendulum seems to be swinging to carbohydrate as a more significant culprit in the development of obesity, diabetes and heart disease. Evidence from a Louisiana study demonstrated that, all other things being equal (such as overall calories), a low carbohydrate (note: not NO carbohydrate!) diet offered greater weight loss and reduced cardiovascular risk, at one year.

Glycemic Controls Matter Too

More fuel is being added to the fire for good blood sugar control in diabetes. Findings presented at the American Diabetes Association 2014 Scientific Sessions emphasized the importance of tight glycemic controls. Having a hemoglobin A1c reading just one point higher than recommended was associated with a 25% increased risk a major cardiovascular event! Those numbers really do matter!

Medications can only go so far in preventing and managing chronic illnesses such as heart disease and diabetes. The rest is up to you! Talk to your pharmacist for lifestyle recommendations as well as drug information.