



Fighting the Good Fight...

Since the mid-seventies, the prevalence of overweight and obesity has increased dramatically for both adults and children and we are now facing an epidemic in the United States. These increasing rates have serious implications for American's health including an increased risk for a variety of diseases and conditions including Type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, and hypertension. The Brazos Valley is no exception to the obesity issue.

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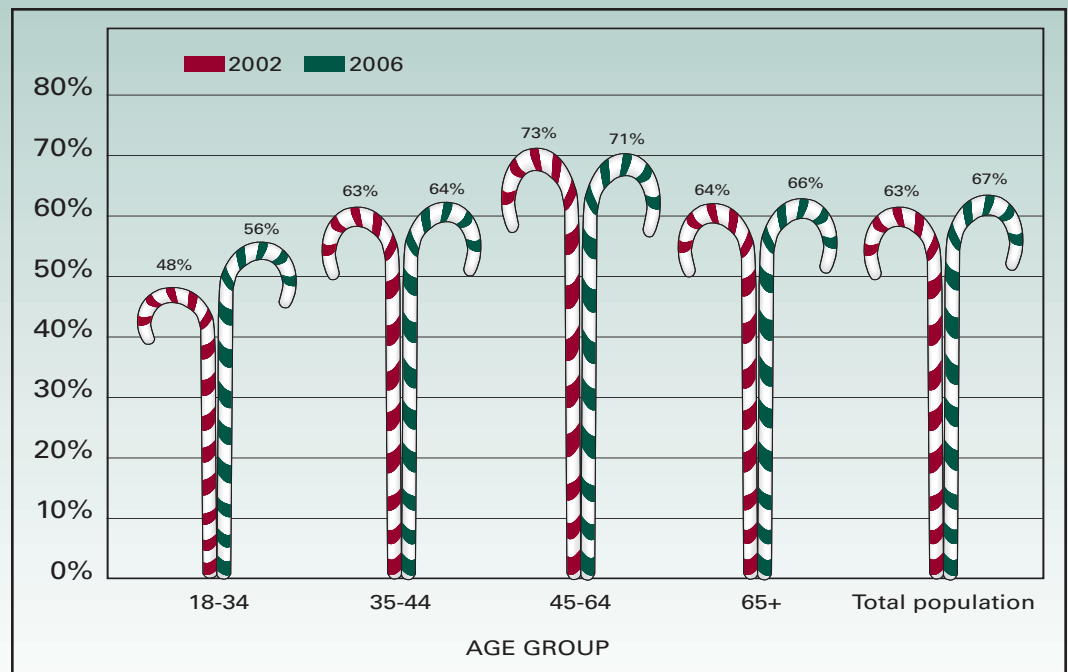
A regional comprehensive health status assessment conducted by the Center for Community Health Development, in collaboration with the Brazos Valley Health Partnership, showed that over two-thirds of the adult population was overweight or obese in 2006, up from 63 percent just four years prior.

While these percentages are similar to state and national averages, they are still of great concern. Armed with local data, the Brazos Valley Health Partnership formed a Special Commission on Obesity and charged them with finding a way to address this issue in our region.

In November, Kerrie Hora, program manager for the Center for Community Health Development's Diabetes Prevention and Management Project, convened a group of stakeholders representing organizations including the local school districts, the local departments of parks and recreation, researchers from Texas A&M

University and the Health Science Center, the local health department, and others. The purpose of this meeting was threefold: 1) to provide a forum for organizations with similar missions to discuss issues they face in regards to obesity, 2) open the doorway for community collaborations and for organizations to create a synergy to battle the obesity epidemic in their own community and 3) to identify initiatives currently underway or planned in order to share lessons learned and resources and to also identify gaps.

Those in attendance identified other stakeholders that needed to be included and agreed that the development of a network of individuals and organizations interested in addressing obesity that could share information and find ways to collaborate that would benefit the entire region. The next meeting will be held after the first of the year.



Welcome Aboard Carrie Sorrells



The Center for Community Health Development would like to welcome Carrie Sorrells as the new Director of Training. Prior to joining the CCHD team, Carrie gained valuable expertise in event coordination and relationship building while working in the private sector in a wide-range of leadership and support roles, most recently in Institutional Corporate Accounts Marketing, Gulf Coast Region with Ecolab, a provider of cleaning, food safety and health protection products and services for the hospitality, foodservice, healthcare and industrial markets.

Carrie attended the University of Mary-Hardin Baylor and she enjoys studying personal development and leadership and has been fortunate to study under some of the masters, such as Paul J. Meyer, Ken Blanchard, Jim Rohn, and many others.

Carrie was born and raised in Lorena, TX. She currently resides in Magnolia, TX with her husband, Jerry, and their two children, Austin and Ashlynn. She enjoys spending time with her family, sports and the outdoors, and volunteering with her church Sunday School class.

Healthy Eating for the Holidays

With the holiday season quickly approaching, visions of sugar plums may start dancing in your head. Treat temptation becomes quite a foe during the holidays between Thanksgiving Day and New Years and the American public tends to gain a few extra pounds. To maintain your weight through the ham, eggnog, pies, fudge and candy canes there are a few healthy eating tips that can help you enjoy the holiday season and still fit into your favorite jeans come January 2nd.

- 1** Plan on NOT dieting after the New Year. Probably the most prevalent New Year's Resolution is to "Lose weight." Relying on your plan to lose weight after the holidays can set you up for overindulging during the festive season which can result in those extra pounds.
- 2** Eat a light, healthy snack before going to holiday parties. If you arrive at a party hungry you are more likely to overeat.
- 3** Avoid recreational "social" eating. Instead of hanging around the party platters, make one plate of foods you really want and eat it slowly.
- 4** Try low fat options for holiday recipes. There are many substitutions that are lower in fat and calories such as nonfat yogurt instead of sour cream or applesauce rather than oil in holiday breads. Low fat substitutes can be found online or in many magazines.
- 5** Practice portion control. You can have those sugary treats and sweet potatoes but go for small portions.
- 6** Be careful when deciding on your beverage. Liquors, sweet wines and sweet mixed are very high in calories. On the other hand water and diet drinks have zero calories. If you decide to drink limit yourself to 1 or 2 drinks.

Following these healthy eating tips can help you maintain your weight during the festive months. Have a Happy and Healthy Holiday Season!

Strong presence at APHA



Faculty and staff of the Center for Community Health Development boasted ten presentations at this year's Annual Public Health Association Meeting in Washington, D.C. Three poster presentations included initial results from the network analysis of the Brazos Valley Health Partnership, application of a community based participatory research process in implementing a chronic disease self management program, and health disparities in diabetes-related lower extremity amputations on the Texas-Mexico border. Topics comparing differences in urban and rural samples for physical activity levels and older women's perceived health status were two oral presentations this year. Faculty and staff participated in a panel discussion on utilizing community health workers in research in South Texas, as well as presented on environmental impact (neighborhood deprivation and access to food stores/services) on South Texas older adults and transportation barriers to accessing children's health care. A symposium on building healthy aging communities for active aging was also organized and presented. The Center was honored when doctoral student John D. Prochaska was presented the Gerontological Health Section's Aging and Rural Health Research Award.



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