Half of American adults, and nearly a quarter of American children and adolescents, are overweight — for one in 50 of us, by more than 100 pounds. Excess weight at any age increases risks of stroke, heart disease, diabetes, joint problems, kidney disease, sleep apnea and fatigue. It interferes with healing after injury or surgery, and shaves years from our lives.

But focusing solely on the scale is not the answer. Studies show overall fitness to be more important than weight. And being thin is not necessarily being healthy. Here are some tips for striking a healthy balance:

**Infants** Give them a good start. Laboratory research suggests that early feedings of high-carbohydrate formula or cereals and juices may trigger a metabolic pattern that encourages obesity. Follow your pediatrician’s advice.

**Children** Turn off the TV and computer. Encourage physical activity; consider exercising as a family. Overweight children are at high risk for the same weight-related diseases as adults. A new study says eating whole grains, fruits and vegetables, and limiting white bread, white rice, sweet cereals and sugary foods may be better than traditional dieting.

**Adolescents** Encourage fitness, but help teens live with their body type. Fight pressures for girls to be thin and boys to be “bulked-up.” One study shows kids teased about body type — regardless of size — are two to three times more likely to contemplate suicide, especially if both family and peers tease. Plan healthy dinners, ban high-calorie snacks, and have a physician supervise nutritional supplement use to avoid blood pressure and kidney problems.

**Men** Keep fitness — as well as portion control — in mind. Studies suggest that exercising one hour five times a week may reduce inflammatory markers that herald heart disease, a prime concern for men. And avoid “biggie” portions — new research shows that obesity negatively impacts memory and learning in men more than women.

**Women** Suburban sprawl means more hours in the car — but make time for exercise. One study finds that women in poor physical condition are three times more likely to die prematurely than fit women. Another shows that briskly walking an hour or two each week decreases breast cancer risks. And exercise will energize you.

So keep an eye on the scale after the “growing years.” Start to eat well and exercise before weight becomes an issue. And remember, it’s never too late to start good habits. To consult family health center specialists about weight-related health concerns, call the Cleveland Clinic Appointment Center, 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., 365 days a year, at 216/444-CARE (444-2273) or 800/223-2273.
So Many Diets – Which One’s for Me?

ATKINS. SOUTH BEACH. THE ZONE. Amazon.com lists more than 30,000 diet books. How do you choose the best one for you?

Losing weight is as simple as eating fewer calories than your body needs. Any diet will do that. But not all diets are safe. Before you decide on a weight-loss plan, ask these questions:

IS THERE SOUND SCIENCE BEHIND IT? A healthy, safe diet plan should be based on scientific research — ideally published in a scientific journal — and developed in conjunction with a registered dietitian. Even a medical doctor or scientist may not be an expert on nutrition.

WOULD REGISTERED DIETITIANS SUPPORT IT? Make sure that the plan is consistent with the American Dietetic Association’s position on weight management (visit www.eatright.org).

DOES IT INCLUDE ALL FOOD GROUPS? While some diets legitimately restrict fat or carbohydrates, avoid plans that completely eliminate them. Each food group contributes essential nutrients.

DOES IT HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS? Diets that severely restrict carbohydrate intake can lead to dangerous electrolyte imbalances, heart problems, dehydration and even organ failure. If you try such a plan, have a health professional monitor your progress.

IS THE DIET SAFE AT MY AGE? Senior citizens and young people are more vulnerable to dietary changes. Check with a doctor before starting on a weight-loss program or supplements.

SHOULD I SEEK PROFESSIONAL ADVICE? If you want to lose a few pounds for your high school reunion, a diet book that meets the above criteria may be all you need. But 95 percent of people who lose pounds on a diet regain them — and sometimes more — within a few years. To learn healthy eating habits that you can maintain for life, it’s best to see a health professional.

For appointments with Strongsville physicians and dietitian Celeste Forsyth, R.D., call 440/878-2500.

Safe Weight-Loss Plans

Registered dietitians can design a safe, nutrient-rich diet that considers your lifestyle, energy needs, and food preferences, to make it easier to stick with the plan. They’ll base it on one of the following approaches:

Traditional — Reduces overall caloric intake while incorporating foods with fiber and fluid, so you feel satisfied. Weight is lost slowly (one-half to one pound per week).

Moderate protein — Limits carbohydrates. May slightly increase protein, but uses low-fat choices. Offers faster short-term weight loss than traditional plan, with similar long-term results.

Protein-sparing modified fast — Severely restricts carbohydrates and calories for rapid weight loss. Recommended only for life-threatening obesity, and requires a physician’s supervision.

Is It a Sinus Headache or Not?

IN WINTER, DRY AIR, VIRUSES, BACTERIA and molds can all affect our sinuses, the cavities behind our facial bones. Sinus problems often cause severe headaches that can be confused with migraine and tension headaches — and congestion that can be confused with allergy. Here are some clues to consider:

• Sinus infections produce nasal stuffiness and pain above the eyebrow, over the cheekbone or behind the eye, often after a cold. Yellow discharge, post-nasal drip, fever, cough and sore throat usually occur.
• Allergies to molds, dust mites and animal dander trapped indoors may cause weeks of nasal stuffiness, mild head pain, and itchy eyes and nose.
• Migraines produce severe, localized pain in the forehead and sometimes around the eye. They limit activity; trigger nausea, and light and noise sensitivity; and often improve with sleep.
• Tension headaches typically cause days of steady, unrelenting pain on the side or back of the head.

If you need further assessment, call 440/878-2500 for appointments at Strongsville.

Board-certified otolaryngologist Steven S. Ball, M.D., offers endoscopic evaluation of sinus problems, computer-assisted sinus surgery and other ear, nose and throat (ENT) procedures.
Antibiotics Use Sparingly

Parents desperate to make a sick child comfortable needn’t be alarmed if antibiotics are not prescribed. Federal health officials have asked physicians to prescribe antibiotics only when necessary, and are now asking parents to cooperate.

Overprescribing antibiotics like penicillin has triggered an alarming rise in antibiotic-resistant germs, the Centers for Disease Control report.

Antibiotics can only cure illnesses caused by bacteria (like Strep throat, bacterial pneumonia, and some ear and sinus infections). They are powerless against viral illnesses, including colds, the common flu, most cases of bronchitis, and pneumonias caused by RSV (respiratory syncytial virus). So if your child is miserable with the flu or bronchitis, ask about over-the-counter decongestants, pain relievers or cough suppressants to make them comfortable.

And when your child does need an antibiotic for a bacterial illness, remember to give it for the entire period prescribed, to knock out the infection completely.

To see pediatrician Jennifer Krcik, M.D., family physician Catherine A. Sheridan, M.D., or Strongsville colleagues, call 440/878-2500. To see a Brunswick family physician, call 330/225-8886.

Trouble on the Ice?

HOCKEY IS AN INTENSE COLLISION SPORT involving high speeds, strength and aggressive play. Constant contact with boards, other players, sticks and pucks, means the following injuries can occur:

Concussions – See a doctor if you have a period of unconsciousness, with confusion or disorientation, or problems with vision or coordination.

Shoulder instability – The arm may become temporarily paralyzed when the bone slips out of the shoulder joint. Pain, swelling, numbness, weakness and bruising can occur. See a doctor immediately.

Clavicle fractures – Collarbone fractures are common and usually cause a palpable deformity. See a doctor right away.

Contusions (bruises) – Ice the area for 20 minutes while stretching; avoid applying heat for at least five days.

Knee and ankle injuries – See a doctor if joint, ligament or sprain injuries cause disfigurement, loss of full mobility and/or instability.

Groin injuries and muscle strains are common in hockey. Strengthening and stretching programs can prevent these injuries.

Kelly A. Richter, M.D., specializes in sports medicine. For appointments with Dr. Richter or orthopaedic surgeon Jeffrey Lawton, M.D., who also treats sports injuries, call 440/878-2500.

Physical Therapy at Cleveland Clinic Strongsville

You don’t have to go far from home for physical therapy services. At Cleveland Clinic Strongsville, rehabilitation experts will work with you to enhance flexibility, strength, coordination, balance, endurance and mobility. Physical therapists, physical therapy assistants and athletic trainers tailor treatment programs to your individual needs — whether you are suffering from back pain, or are recovering from a sports injury or surgery. To schedule appointments, call 440/878-2500.
Appointments

Cleveland Clinic Strongsville
16761 SouthPark Center
Strongsville, OH 44136
440/878-2500 or 800/239-1098
Monday through Thursday: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Friday: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday: 8 a.m. to noon

Cleveland Clinic Brunswick
3724 Center Road, Suite 100
Brunswick, OH 44212
330/225-8886 or 800/231-7567
Monday through Thursday: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Friday: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday: 8 a.m. to noon

Cleveland Clinic Cancer Care Center at Strongsville
To see our medical oncologists about cancer diagnosis or treatment, call
440/878-2500
To speak with a nurse about cancer symptoms or concerns, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., call the Cleveland Clinic Cancer Answer Line:
216/444-7923 or 800/862-7798

Cleveland Clinic Strongsville Surgery Center
16761 SouthPark Center
Strongsville, OH 44136
440/878-3400 or 800/239-1098
The Cleveland Clinic Strongsville Surgery Center offers state-of-the-art outpatient surgical care in a convenient community setting. Our staff is committed to ensuring patients' comfort and satisfaction. Outpatient procedures are performed in six sophisticated operating suites. After spending a limited time in the postoperative care area, patients are discharged to complete their recovery in the privacy and comfort of home.

Cleveland Clinic Nurse on Call

To speak with a nurse, 8 a.m. to 11 p.m., Monday through Friday, about your adult and pediatric health concerns, call

216/444-1234
800/801-2273

Other Family Health Centers

Beachwood 216/839-3000
Chagrin Falls 440/893-9593
Creston 330/435-5400
Elyria 440/366-8822
Independence 216/986-4000
Lakewood 216/521-4400
Lorain 440/204-7400
Solon 440/519-6800
Westlake 440/899-5555
Willoughby Hills 440/943-2500
Wooster 330/287-4500
Catherine A. Sheridan, M.D., is a board-certified family medicine specialist. Her specialty interests include pediatrics, women’s health, general dermatology, minor office surgeries and preventive medicine. A graduate of Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine in Rootstown, Dr. Sheridan completed her family medicine residency at Dwight David Eisenhower Army Medical Center in Fort Gordon, Ga. Prior to joining the Strongsville Family Health and Surgery Center, she was commander of the U.S. Army Health Clinic in Buedingen, Germany, where she received the Army’s Meritorious Service Medal.

Gastroenterologist Prashanthi N. Thota, M.D., board-certified in internal medicine, specializes in diagnostic and therapeutic endoscopy, esophageal diseases and inflammatory bowel disease. Dr. Thota completed her internal medicine residency at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in Bronx, New York, and her fellowship in gastroenterology and hepatology at The Cleveland Clinic.

Send completed coupon to: The Cleveland Clinic Foundation
PO. Box 943
Wooster, OH 44691

or call toll-free: 800/545-7718

For appointments, call 440/878-2500
**More Drugs Aid Fight Against Breast Cancer**

Thanks to advances in mammography, surgery, and medical and radiation therapies, most women today survive breast cancer, say Cleveland Clinic Cancer Care Center specialists. Medical oncologists now draw from several “families” of drugs for treatment and prevention.

The hormone therapy tamoxifen (Novadex) prevents breast cancer in women at high risk, and recurrences for five years in estrogen-sensitive tumors. But if tamoxifen is tolerated poorly or stops working, oncologists turn to a different family of hormone therapies that includes letrozole (Femara), anastrozole (Arimidex) and exemestane (Aromasin). A new study shows that letrozole drastically cuts breast cancer recurrence after tamoxifen is stopped.

The new chemotherapy agents paclitaxel (Taxol, Onxal) and docetaxel (Taxotere) belong to another family of drugs that works through slightly different pathways to fight breast cancer. And the monoclonal antibody drug trastuzumab (Herceptin) can target breast tumor cells that express a certain protein, making them more sensitive to chemotherapy.

Strongsville Cancer Care Center oncologist Shawn He, M.D., and surgeon Alicia Fanning, M.D., are available to see women with breast cancer.

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**Menstrual Suppression: Consider Long-Term Impact**

The FDA recently approved a new birth control pill designed to reduce the frequency of a woman’s periods from monthly to quarterly, but medical experts are divided on its long-term impact.

The “menstrual suppression” pill Seasonale contains the same combination of low-dose estrogen and progestin as other oral contraceptives, but involves 12 straight weeks of active pills followed by one week of inert pills.

Clinical trials found menstrual suppression to be as effective in preventing pregnancy as traditional oral contraceptives, with similar risks. The new method also holds promise for reducing the severity of symptoms and menstrual frequency for women with endometriosis, PMS, or painful, heavy or lengthy periods.

Yet scientific experts raise these concerns:

- The very slight potential risk of cervical cancer, as seen with traditional oral contraceptive use for five or more years
- The decrease in women’s testosterone from oral contraceptive use that impairs libido, energy, muscle tone and brain function
- Unknown long-term effects on fertility and bone health

Strongsville OB/GYN specialist Womack Stokes, M.D., and family medicine specialist Sandra M. Snyder, D.O., are available to help women weigh the risks and benefits of different contraceptives.

Marjan Attaran, M.D., board-certified in obstetrics and gynecology, specializes in infertility, in vitro fertilization, advanced laparoscopic surgery and reproductive endocrinology.

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**IVF: New Safeguards**

A new technique offered through the Cleveland Clinic’s In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) Laboratory may offer reassurance when couples face increased risks of miscarriage or birth defects.

A board-certified infertility specialist assesses and counsels the patient before proceeding with in vitro fertilization. Later, in the laboratory, a single cell can be removed for genetic analysis. This process is known as preimplantation genetic diagnosis, or PGD. Only embryos likely to have normal chromosomes are later transferred to the mother’s uterus.

The technique is especially helpful for carriers of certain genetic diseases and women who have suffered recurrent miscarriages or are over 38.

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Women can make appointments at Strongsville by calling 440/878-2500, and at Brunswick by calling 330/225-8886.