

Transcript Season 2 Episode 3 : Why Bother to Maintain a Healthy Weight?

Maybe you have noticed for the last few years, social media has had a lot to say about body image and how much people weigh. Being positive and accepting of yourself and others is truly an important part of to being happy and healthy, but some of the messages can go too far and actually be detrimental or prevent people from putting out the effort needed to maintain a healthy body weight. Having a good self-image and self-acceptance is important, but it should support us in our quest for good health, not be an excuse.

Keep listening because today on Grown Up U: Facts for Success, we are going to talk about why a healthy body weight matters and why we should put out the effort to maintain it.

Podcast Opener:

Everyone needs some advice now and then. If you are getting ready to leave home or have been on your own for a while, Grown Up U: Facts for Success can give you trusted advice that can take the stress out of adulthood. Listen and find some answers to the questions being constantly bombarded at you.

Podcast Script:

Alison Crane:

Thank you for listening today, I'm Alison Crane, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent for the Garland County Extension Service located in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

If you have been listening to our podcasts for season 2, you may be noticing a trend. March is National Nutrition Month and we have set our podcast calendar to cover nutrition related topics to start season 2 off right. Our team wanted to give our listeners some practical information in the area of nutrition and meal planning. Today, I'm going to share about body weight.

Weight can be a touchy subject, as well as a frustrating subject for anyone who has struggled with their weight. Anyone who has tried to lose weight, knows that losing weight is not something that you can just snap your finger and accomplish.

Maintaining your ideal body weight is hard and losing weight is even harder but here's something important you should know, losing even a few pounds can improve your health. Let me share some the positive things that happen in your body when you are living with a healthy

weight. According to the American Heart Association and the Harvard's public health school, when you maintain a healthy weight:

- Your body more efficiently circulates blood.
- Your fluid levels are more easily managed.
- A healthy weight makes you less likely to develop diabetes, heart disease, heart attacks, strokes, diabetes, certain cancers, gallstones, osteoarthritis, breathing problems like asthma, (believe it or not) cataracts, infertility, snoring and sleep apnea.
- Plus, think about it, maintaining our weight is an accomplishment and doesn't accomplishing something can make us feel better about ourselves?
- And often one positive change leads to more positive health changes.

With a list like that you can see there are some really big benefits to maintaining a healthy weight.

Well, maybe you are like me, and you like to know the details. So, let's talk some numbers.

I like how statistics can actually provide a mind picture showing how a healthy weight affects the long term – your weight, your waist size, and the amount of weight gained since your mid-20s are the factors that can strongly influence how likely you are to have the problems I just mentioned.

Now I know most of our listeners are older teens and early 20s, and you may think well I'm not past my 20s and I'm active and healthy, why does it matter?

Most adults between the ages of 18 and 49 gain 1-2 pounds each year. Gaining weight as you age increases your chances of developing one or more chronic diseases. Let's face it, the longer you "adult," often the less time you have for sports or other physical activities. You also might be eating on the run and either eating too much and/or not the best foods. That adulthood weight gain has a direct effect on our health.

One study found that middle-aged women and men who gained 11 to 22 pounds after age 20 were up to three times more likely to develop heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and gallstones than those who gained five pounds or fewer.

I really like something Eleanor Roosevelt said, "I am who I am today because of the choices I made yesterday." Let me say that again, "I am who I am today because of the choices I made yesterday."

Even though, she wasn't really referring to weight gain, it still applies. Think of it like this "Today is tomorrow's yesterday." (By the way, I thought that up myself and then I decided to look it up and there's actually a song and a couple books plus a clothing line using that, but I really did think it up without their help.)

What I'm trying to say is even if you are at your ideal weight today, you still need to be making conscious choices today because it will affect your tomorrow. If you are not at your ideal weight, don't give up! I guarantee that it is easier to make changes when you are young than waiting until you are 40 something and your doctor says you are headed toward a stroke or worse if you do not change your habits and lose weight.

So, let's talk about how to maintain a healthy weight and then we will wrap up with some good health habits.

Okay, whether you have lost some weight and you want to keep it off or are at a good weight range, it takes effort to keep it off. It takes mindfulness but does not mean being miserable or constantly nagging yourself.

The American Heart Association has some good tips for keeping the weight off.

First, is know your triggers, roadblocks, and favorite excuses. A little introspection can be a big help.

Second, this is a long-term effort so don't kid yourself into thinking you can "be good" for a little while and the weight will magically stay down.

Next is to learn from others. Hanging out with people who have succeeded or have good habits and follow their example.

Their fourth suggestion is to find healthy ways to motivate yourself. Last summer, my husband and I bought kayaks. Not only are we getting out and exercising with them, being out there is so much fun that it's its own reward. We love it! So, find something you love other than food and reward yourself with it.

Also, keep in mind that at the end of the day, it's up to you.

Finally, diet alone won't do it. Exercise is essential. The American Heart Association recommends 200 to 300 minutes of physical activity a week to keep the extra pounds from creeping back.

By the way, did you know that the amount of sleep you get is directly linked to how much you weigh? In general, adults and children who get enough sleep tend to weigh less than those who get too little. Five hours of sleep per night or less puts you at a 15 percent higher risk of becoming obese.

Before I mention a few tips for good health habits, I want to ask you a question. Chances are you have heard what I have just shared before. If you have and you aren't making good health choices, what is stopping you? (pause)

I'm a firm believer that we do what we want. Want something enough and you will make it happen. So, what will it take to make you want good health?

Now as for tips and good health habits, start by getting up and moving. Do like my husband and me and find some kind of physical activity that you enjoy and do it. But be realistic.

You may love water sports, but the nearest lake or river access may take too long to easily get to it. That is not going to be your best choice for regular exercise. Think about what is available in your area that you can do where you live or within a short drive or walk. Save the other activities you love as your reward for accomplishing a goal.

Next, make good food choices but remember that you do not have to be miserable. So many times, dieting brings on the mindset that healthy food is not tasty or appealing. You may need to take a cooking class to learn the best ways to prepare your food, but healthy eating is not eating food that tastes like cardboard.

A great place to start exploring your food options is by going back and listening to our podcast on MyPlate if you haven't already listened to it. For that episode, we explore some of the great free tools available on myplate.gov. Download their app and get started with your own eating plan that you can keep on your phone.

Another useful episode is last week's episode on fad diets. There are a lot of diets that promise fast results but as soon as you stop their strict guidelines the weight comes right back. Most of them are not sustainable because they eliminate key nutrients or reduce your calories too much. Our FCS agent, Pamela Luker, and Dr. Jamie Baum share some great information on the Mediterranean Diet and other healthy diets that are proven to be beneficial.

Finally, did you know that you can call, email, come by any of our Extension offices with your questions about health and nutrition? You can also check with your local county Extension agent for more information on programs or classes happening in your county. We also have a statewide program that happens each spring and fall, called Walk Across Arkansas, that is a great way to get motivated to get up and moving with a team of friends.

Be sure to catch next week's podcast on food safety. Whether you are at home, a dorm, or on your own, knowing how to keep your food safe is an essential "adulting" skill because a foodborne illness is never a great way to diet!

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