

# Health & Fitness

## New evidence links illness overweight

By Dr. Howard Morgan  
Director Sigfried and Janet Weis Center  
for Research

If you need extra incentive to control your weight, now you have it.

Findings of a major research study over the past two decades indicate the following, as reported in the *New England Journal of Medicine*:

1. Excess weight plays a significant role in one-third of all cancer deaths and one-half of all deaths from diseases of the heart and arteries.
2. Four times as many obese people die of heart disease as thin persons.
3. Twice as many obese people die of cancer as thin people.
4. People only moderately overweight die sooner, on average, than thin persons.

What does all this mean to you? In simple terms, this: keep your weight under control in consultation with your physician. Eat right. Exercise within your physical limitations. Get regular check-ups to monitor your health.

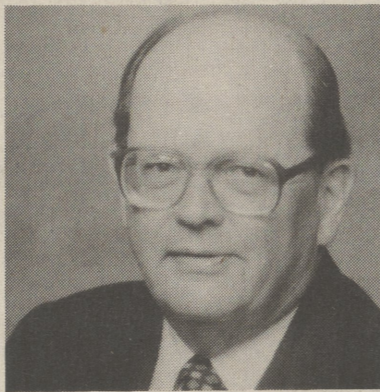
The study establishing the perils of excess weight was impres-

sive. Begun in 1976, it involved 115,000 female nurses between ages 30 and 55. It did not include nurses who were thin because they smoked or because they suffered from a disease. Although males did not participate in the study, our best evidence indicates that the findings apply to them as well as to women.

Why are overweight people at higher risk of developing cancer and heart disease than thin people? Why does an obese 55-year-old plumber in Pottsville, for example, develop colon cancer while an obese 55-year-old plumber in Wilkes-Barre remains cancer-free and in good health?

Laboratory research may provide the answers. At the Weis Center, we track the activity of the inner body, the body wrapped in skin and hidden from the gaze of the outside world. Of particular interest to us is the cell. Normally cells go quietly about their business of sustaining the body and keeping it disease-free. Sometimes, though, they turn against the body, multiplying wildly to form lumps or impair tissue.

We poise our microscopes to record such wayward activity, and



DR. HOWARD MORGAN

we are making progress against it. So are colleagues at other research centers. For example, a researcher at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston believes body fat and dietary fats may trigger a chemical reaction that unleashes certain forms of cancer.

What if ongoing research proves that researcher right? What if research pinpoints the cause of abnormal cell activity, or any other kind of activity, that leads to cancer and heart disease in obese persons?

Then we can begin taking steps to improve treatment methods or to prevent that Pottsville plumber from getting cancer in the first place.

## Some prostate problems are benign

The more a man ages, the more he needs to know about non-cancerous prostate enlargement, reports Neil Lesitsky, president of the Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians.

"One in every four men in the United States will require some form of treatment for this condition, medically termed as benign prostatic hyperplasia or BPH," Dr. Lesitsky says. By the time men reach the age of 60, more than half will suffer from BPH; 95% of men will have microscopic evidence of the condition by the time they reach age 85.

BPH is a common condition which causes male urination problems by creating pressure that causes the urine flow to become slower and less forceful.

Symptoms include: urinary retention or the sensation of incomplete emptying of the bladder, weak and/or intermittent stream or straining to urinate, and frequent urination.

A man who experiences one or more of these symptoms should consult his physician. Usually, the physician performs

a simple exam, and may order a urine sample and a blood test. Some patients also need a biopsy to accurately diagnose BPH.

"The health urgency for this disorder is that millions of men, if not treated in time, could experience irreversible problems with bladder muscle tone or long-term bladder obstruction," warns Dr. Lesitsky. "Fifteen years ago the primary care physician had little to offer male patients to treat severe cases of BPH. Today, there are a number of minimally invasive surgical and medication options to address this disease."

Surgery is one treatment, usually through transurethral resection. About 300,000 BPH surgical procedures are performed in the U.S. each year. Alpha Blockers and Finasteride (Proscar) are medicines given as alternatives to surgery, although they often have mild side effects such as dizziness, fatigue, or lightheadedness.

Men who have concerns about BPH and other health issues should talk to their family physician.

## Subdivision

(continued from page 1)

to the supervisors for approval.

The suggested modifications, intended to protect the township from unnecessary expenses in case the sewer plant became inoperable, are:

- Strengthen the definition of the developer to include not only Giambra, but also anyone or any corporation he might sell it to during construction.

- Make the homeowners' association financially responsible for repairing the sewer plant if it becomes inoperable.

- Add the mandatory establishment of a sinking fund to help pay for upkeep and repairs to the sewer system and plant in the covenants. Each homeowner would be required to contribute to the fund, either by yearly dues or an upfront fee included in the price of their lot.

"This insures us that some money has been set aside in case the plant breaks down or wears out," McCormick said.

- Require Giambra to build the system to operate at between 120 and 140 percent of capacity in case either township changes their minimum lot sizes, allowing more than 25 lots to be developed. The additional capacity would also insure the sewer system isn't overloaded.

- Change the operations bond of the sewer plant from covering two years or when all the lots are sold, whichever is earlier, to cover the plant for two years or when all the lots are sold, whichever comes later.

"The track history for rural developments like this is that all the lots are not sold within two years," McCormick said. "This phrase helps to protect the township from becoming saddled with a half-finished sewer system and roads in a partially developed subdivision."

- Allow both townships to hold unannounced inspections of the sewer plant.

- Require a certified sewer plant operator and backup operator.

- Require itemized statements of the cost of the plant before construction so that the construction bond may be accurately computed, itemized statements of the plant's operational expenses and itemized statements of the cost and anticipated lifetime of the plant's equipment in case the township should be forced to take the plant over due to unforeseen circumstances.

- Change the legal terminology to allow the township to place liens on all the development's properties or sue the homeowners' association and developer if necessary to recover any costs it might incur from the sewer plant.

"These suggestions are based on a worst-case scenario - the plant breaking down and polluting the creek, nobody able to come up with the money to fix it and the state forcing us to take the plant over," McCormick said. "It may not happen, but if it does, we're covered."

Toby Humphrey and commission member Lee Clark said they are concerned about the development's individual wells drawing down the water table and causing nearby wells to go dry.

"I have seen someone drill an artesian well which would have affected everyone around it if it hadn't been controlled," Humphrey said. "Hydrological studies are basically only educated guesses. I don't want to see the township get stuck providing Bella Mundana with a new water system."

Ed Dorrance said Giambra was required to perform controlled tests and suggested nearby homeowners test the number of gallons per minute their wells are supplying both before and during development, in order to maintain accurate records in case they experience well problems.

Humphrey also suggested a licensed analyst inspect the plant every six months to make sure it's operating legally and properly and provide written reports and explanations to both townships.

The commission also unanimously accepted the Randall Mark minor subdivision, pending approval by the Luzerne County planning commission. A 19-acre parcel on Cummings Road zoned agricultural, the land will be divided into a 12-acre lot and a seven-acre lot.

The commission unanimously accepted the resignation of chairman Hank Psołka for business reasons. "We're accepting his resignation very reluctantly," said Ed Dorrance, who chaired the meeting. "We'll miss Hank."

The commission unanimously elected Dorrance as its new chairman, with co-chairman Mark Millington not voting because he came to the meeting 30 minutes late.

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**Doctor's Day, March 30, 1996**