

Diabetes and weight management—¡Si se puede!

By Maria Palafox, MD

Many of us are overweight, one third of Americans or one third of the rest of America, which is medically obese. In the Latino community, it's even worse—42.5 percent of adults Latinos are obese. Being overweight or obese makes us more likely to have heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some types of cancer. These things are preventable by losing weight. You heard me. Preventable.

Guidelines provided by the CDC regarding management of diabetes tell us that losing five to 10 percent of our body weight can be enough to avoid diabetes if we are high risk or pre-diabetic. For diabetics, the same modest weight loss can go a long way to managing sugar levels to avoid complications of diabetes. So let's do the math. Let's say you weigh 240 pounds. Ten percent of 240 is 24 pounds; five percent of that is 12 pounds.

That is a very reasonable,

achievable goal that sounds a lot easier than saying your New Year's resolution will be to lose 60 pounds and get down to 180 pounds, your fighting weight in high school. So how are we going to achieve this? The solution is heartbreaking and simple: burn more calories than you take in. If you can cut out 250-500 calories a day, in a week you will lose half to one pound a week.

A 20-ounce bottle of Big Red is about 250 calories; the standard accompaniment, Hot Cheetos, is about 370 calories for the big snack bag. You see where I am going with this.

Exercise has also been proven to decrease the chance of developing diabetes and helping manage blood sugar in those that already have diabetes. Being at work for 10-12 hours a day does not really count as exercise for most of us, even if it's somewhat physical work. We all want to work out for an hour daily, but finding that time can be very difficult. How about 10 minutes?

Everyone can find 10 minutes

in a day; find a couple of 10 minutes and you are off to a great start. Or burn 100 calories at a time! I found this on Pinterest:

- 40 jumping jacks
- 30 crunches
- 20 squats
- 10 pushups

This is reported to burn 100 calories; do it three times a day every day and you are on your way to losing half a pound to a pound a week.

The bottom line is this: many of us are at risk or already have diabetes. Acting like we don't know anything about diabetes is only going to shorten our lives. Losing weight is very hard. Making little changes every day will provide slow but steady improvement in our health in terms of weight loss that will help us avoid the complications of diabetes.

Not only that, but you will also see improvement in your blood pressure and you will decrease your risk for certain cancers associated with being overweight, like breast and colon cancer. ¡Si se puede!

Study says asymptomatic people can transmit dengue virus to mosquitoes

EFE - People infected with the dengue virus, but without related symptoms, can transmit it to mosquitoes, which is a risk factor as such people are more exposed to the insects than the ones who know they are sick, according to a study published Monday in the Journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

So far, it was assumed that virus levels in the blood of asymptomatic people were too low to infect mosquitoes.

Researcher Philippe Buchy, from the Pasteur Institute of Paris, and his team decided to test the assumption with an experiment that involved injecting mosquitoes with laboratory blood from 181 people who had detectable levels of the virus.

The scientists found the asymptomatic individuals passed on dengue despite the low virus levels in their blood.

The study concludes that dengue infections through asymptomatic persons can contribute more to virus transmission than what was believed, above all because these individuals are exposed to mosquitoes more than those who already know they are ill and thus live confined in the house or hospital.

More than a third of the world's population lives in regions at risk of infection and the dengue virus is a leading cause of disease and death in tropical and subtropical areas, according to data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

More than 400 million people

annually contract this disease, caused by any one of four closely related dengue viruses and transmitted mostly by the Aedes aegypti mosquito, followed by Aedes albopictus.

No vaccines for dengue are available yet, and the most effective safety measures are those which involve avoiding mosquito bites.

Early detection of the infection and timely treatment can significantly reduce the risk of medical complications or death.

Dengue emerged as a global health risk only since the 1950s.

While the disease is quite rare in the U.S. mainland, it is endemic in Puerto Rico, as well as in many tourist destinations in Latin America, South-East Asia and the Pacific islands.



Municipal Corporation sanitation workers fumigate an area as part of an anti-malaria fumigation drive to curb breeding sites for mosquitoes causing dengue and malaria after the dengue outbreak in Bhopal, India, last Sept. 7. (EFE)

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Dr. Maria Palafox is a female surgeon dedicated to serving surgery patients on San Antonio's South Side. If you have any general surgical need, call her today. Dr. Palafox graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge and went on to pursue both her medical degree and a post-residency fellowship in critical care. She is a highly skilled professional trained in the most advanced laparoscopic and endoscopic techniques, has extensive breast cancer surgery experience, and is adroit with the latest advances in genetic testing. Dr. Palafox habla español con elocuencia.

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