

“I think sometimes, parents think a big kid is a healthy kid. They think a big kid is a blessed child.”

Dr. James Shoptaw, Laurel County cardiologist

OBESITY

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try, a testament to this nation's battle of the bulge. An assessment by the Kentucky Institute of Health shows nearly one in three Laurel Countians are obese. And a study conducted by the Healthy Children's Task Force five years ago concluded 37 percent of Laurel County children were either at risk for being overweight or obese.

Troubling though those numbers may be, some doctors feel the estimates are much lower than the reality. Somerset physician Dr. Joseph Weigel, for example, estimated about 75 percent of his internal medicine patients are either overweight or obese.

“That may sound like over-estimation, but no,” he said. “I would emphasize the national and even the state numbers underestimate the state of the problem.”

And that problem, experts say, is a serious one that especially has ramifications for this generation.

“Unfortunately, we are probably raising the first generation of children who will live less long than their parents,” said Dr. William Hacker, Kentucky commissioner for public health.

Too many calories, not enough exercise

When asked to identify the cause of the high obesity rate, professionals point to a simple formula: too many calories and not enough exercise.

“What's killing us is inactivity and fast food,” said Rebecca Kraftick, a London-based physician assistant. “Kids are playing video games, parents are sitting behind a computer and they run to McDonald's to eat.”

In fact, on an average day in the United States, about one quarter of the population eats fast food, statistics collected in the book “Fast Food Nation” indicate. American children now get about one quarter of their total vegetable servings in the form of potato chips and French fries. And the typical teenage boy in the United States now gets about 10 percent of his daily calories from soda.

School nurse Duff Holcomb said she sees and hears about what students are eating every day.

“Their eating habits are terrible,” she said. “Their consumption of fruits and vegetables is minimal. It seems like they're living mostly on fast food

and things you take out of packages.”

Still, experts say people's food choices wouldn't be as problematic if they were coupled with physical exercise.

“Several generations ago, when more people lived in rural areas, if you went out and worked hard, you could get away with not eating the world's best meals because you were burning off calories,” said Dr. Bill Neal, director of the CARDIAC Project. “The bottom line is: In order to maintain your weight, you have to burn as many calories as you consume. Almost everybody who is obese is obese because of lifestyle, not because of genetics.”

But rather than increase physical activity to offset calorie intake, children and adults have become increasingly sedentary.

“Children don't have guidance to get outside,” said Mark Hensley, executive director of the Laurel County Health Department. “Kids are getting home from school and they're staying in. They're not outside playing.”

In fact, Laurel County elementary school children receive physical education at school just one to two times per week. Moreover, the Kids Health Organization estimates kids and teens 8 to 18 years old spend nearly four hours a day in front of a TV screen and almost two additional hours on the computer — outside of school work.

Kids aren't the only ones staying put, however.

U.S. Labor Department numbers show only 16 percent of people exercise on an average day. In Laurel County, inactivity is a major problem — 37 percent of adults are considered physically inactive, according to a Kentucky Institute of Medicine study.

Still, every medical professional polled said the larger problem is what people are eating. “People have developed that craving for that no-nutritional-value junk,” Holcomb said. “We should look at it as a reward, but we don't.”

Lifestyle changes

What changed? Many experts point to a societal shift in the fabric of the family. Sharing a home-cooked meal around the dinner table has become a thing of the past for many families.

“The family unit is just broken,” Holcomb said. “People used to eat together and it bonded the family. Socially, that's

a big one.”

Author Michael Pollan seems to agree.

“It is at the dinner table that we socialize and civilize our children,” he wrote in his book “In Defense of Food.” “At the dinner table parents can determine portion sizes, model eating and drinking behavior, and enforce social norms about greed and gluttony and waste.”

WeightWatchers success story Helen Crawford admits there has been a similar break in her family.

“(When I was a mother) we had to cook,” she said. “If we ate, I cooked three meals a day and we didn't have snacks ... It was always something we fixed at home. Now, in the later years, I find myself (stopping at fast food restaurants) with my grandchildren, and getting them something to eat. That's the way of life right now.”

Ironically, Weight Watchers devotee Lindsey LaBore said it was in taking her children to and from sporting events that caused her to gain weight.

“My weight gain came from probably hitting the drive-thrus going to and from,” she said. “We just grabbed supper wherever we could grab it.”

Experts also repeatedly point to TV and video and computer games as part of the problem.

“If I had the power, I would take away all batteries,” Hacker said. “There would be none for video games to work. We would need to turn them off. That combination of couch and a video screen is stimulating of weight gain. But that is the culture we're in.”

Un-walkable communities

Even when people do get off the couch and get outside, however, they are often faced with having nowhere to go. In many cases, communities are not physically built “to encourage physical activity,” Hacker said.

Hacker points to the lack of sidewalks in subdivisions and beside city streets, the prevalence of cul de sacs and the lack of parks as contributing factors to physical inactivity — especially in Kentucky.

“Nationwide, 20 percent of any block will have access to a park within a half a mile,” he said. “In Kentucky, it's only 10 percent. We actually have less places for people to go. Kentucky's topography is challenging.”

Labore agreed.

“If I was not in a subdi-

vision, no, I would not be able to go outside and walk,” she said. “The highway is way too busy.”

Moreover, getting to a grocery store almost always requires driving to it — often so far, people are more inclined to stop at a convenience store than make the full trip to the grocery.

“In many communities, it's a 10-mile, 15-mile drive to get to a grocery store that has enough traffic value to stock fresh fruit and vegetables,” Hacker said. “It's a challenge. If it were an easy thing to solve, it would have been solved.”

Changing mindsets

But if something is not done, many medical experts are concerned the problem will be “normalized” before it is fixed.

“I think sometimes, parents think a big kid is a healthy kid,” Shoptaw said. “They think a big kid is a blessed child.”

Weigel said he sees “normalization” happening already in his practice. He spoke of one patient in particular who recently lost 65 pounds.

“This lady made it her personal drive for whatever reason to make up her mind that what was wasn't going to be,” he said. “She's probably gone from 220 to 155 pounds. She's taking less than half the medicine she was taking before. Her overall health and general demeanor are much better than when she started.”

Despite the fact that she's been dedicated to her weight loss, people close to her do not approve.

“People think now she doesn't look right,” Weigel said. “(They say) she actually looks less than well, that something must be wrong with her.”

And that response, Weigel said, is telling.

“It is simply a confirmation of my observation: Being heavy and even being seriously heavy, has almost lost any of its stigma,” he said. “We almost as a society now are being called on to accept this as OK, even though it's clear, and the evidence shows this, that it's not healthy ... The sad fact is what is grossly abnormal is now being seen as normal. This is of concern because it is becoming less worrisome to patients that they are heavy, less worrisome to patients that they are diabetic ... and that what clearly represents significant illness is now being accepted as the norm.”

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Edward Jones

Dow Jones Ind Avg 10,302.01 -1.14 -0.01% New York Stock Exchange A/D/U 1,880/1,090/138 Vol. 787,074,072

S&P 500 1,079.38 +0.13 +0.01 NASDAQ 2,181.87 +8.39 +0.39% Vol 1,629,157,560

Symbol	Description	Flags	Price	Change	Bid	Ask	Volume	52 wk H-L
AM	AMER GREET A	CL USD	19.07	-0.07	19.05	19.07	241,531	13.20-26.21
T	AT&T	CL USD	26.65	-0.07	26.65	26.67	19,789,000	23.78-28.73
BAC	BANK OF AMERICA	CL USD	13.19	-0.04	13.19	13.21	98,908,384	13.02-19.86
BBT	BB&T CORP	CL USD	23.80	-0.03	23.80	23.81	3,774,425	23.73-35.72
BMY	BRISTOL MYERS SQ	CL USD	26.28	-0.04	26.28	26.29	10,241,497	21.49-27.07
CAT	CATERPILLAR INC	CL USD	68.49	+0.48	68.49	68.52	5,390,075	43.19-72.83
CVX	CHEVRON	CL USD	77.71	+0.31	77.70	77.73	7,276,810	66.06-83.41
CLX	CLOROX CO	CL USD	64.25	-0.06	64.21	64.25	508,697	56.36-66.44
CO	CODACOLA CO	CL USD	55.88	+0.15	55.88	55.89	6,945,204	48.12-59.45
CTB	COMMUNITY TST	CL USD	26.12	+0.45	26.05	26.13	41,276	22.15-31.56
CBRL	CRACKER BAREL OLD	CL USD	45.85	+0.21	45.79	45.86	281,394	40.67-53.43
CSX	CSX CORP	CL USD	50.28	-0.11	50.27	50.30	2,292,532	40.67-62.00
DELL	DELL INC	CL USD	11.96	-0.05	11.96	11.97	13,011,489	11.72-17.52
DUK	DUKE ENERGY	CL USD	17.03	+0.02	17.03	17.04	6,514,507	15.04-17.94
DGAS	DELTA NATURAL	CL USD	29.33	-1.10	29.16	29.98	1,211	24.00-31.61
EMR	EMERSON ELECTRIC	CL USD	48.05	-0.18	48.02	48.05	2,193,970	33.72-53.73
EXM	EXXON MOBIL	CL USD	59.88	-0.03	59.83	59.88	14,295,262	55.94-76.54
FLO	FLOWERS FOODS	CL USD	24.38	+0.38	24.35	24.38	735,945	21.90-27.58
F	FORD MOTOR CO	CL USD	11.99	-0.16	11.99	12.00	59,261,112	6.61-14.57
GE	GENERAL ELEC CO	CL USD	15.46	+0.08	15.46	15.47	56,368,896	13.03-19.70
HD	HOME DEPOT INC	CL USD	27.38	+0.07	27.38	27.40	12,129,895	24.47-37.03
INTC	INTEL CORP	CL USD	19.47	+0.32	19.47	19.48	48,626,252	18.31-24.37
IBM	INTL BUS MACHINE	CL USD	127.77	-0.10	127.74	127.78	4,008,130	115.15-134.25
JRJC	JAMES RIVER COAL	CL USD	17.54	-0.08	17.54	17.56	484,365	14.44-23.10
JHU	JOHNSON JOHNSON	CL USD	58.01	-0.14	58.00	58.02	8,727,143	56.86-66.20
KR	KROGER CO	CL USD	21.92	-0.08	21.92	21.94	4,355,169	19.08-24.80
LDO	LOWES COMPANIES	CL USD	19.70	+0.11	19.70	19.71	25,991,368	19.15-28.54
MCD	MCDONALDS CORP	USD	71.79	-0.10	71.61	71.87	4,933,445	53.88-73.34
DIS	WALT DISNEY CO	CL USD	33.66	-0.02	33.64	33.66	6,916,176	24.89-37.98
MKX	MERCK & CO	CL USD	34.97	-0.03	34.96	34.99	6,886,492	28.69-41.56
MSFT	MICROSOFT CP	CL USD	24.50	+0.10	24.50	24.51	40,894,740	22.73-31.58
PEP	PEPSICO INC	CL USD	65.43	-0.13	65.42	65.45	3,564,424	55.69-67.61
PFE	PRIZER INC	CL USD	16.03	-0.05	16.02	16.03	5,966,600	14.00-20.36
PVC	PVC FINL SVC	CL USD	55.64	+0.55	55.61	55.64	2,822,874	39.39-70.45
PG	PROCTER & GAMBLE	CL USD	59.77	-0.05	59.74	59.78	13,138,091	39.37-64.58
RDS A	ROYAL DUTCH SH A	CL USD	55.46	-0.01	55.44	55.46	778,775	49.16-63.75
SLE	SARA LEE CORP	CL USD	14.77	+0.22	14.77	14.78	11,051,293	9.17-15.40
SO	SOUTHERN	CL USD	35.87	+0.03	35.85	35.87	2,898,430	30.72-36.78
UNP	UNION PACIFIC CP	CL USD	73.09	-0.36	73.06	73.10	2,041,829	54.20-78.61
UPS	UNITED PARCEL B	CL USD	64.65	+0.21	64.65	64.66	2,895,778	51.90-70.89
VZ	VERIZON COMMIS	CL USD	29.96	-0.07	29.96	29.97	14,078,942	24.76-31.90
WEN	WENDY'S INTL	CL USD	4.02	-0.04	4.02	4.03	1,856,641	3.83-5.55
WMT	WAL-MART STORES	CL USD	50.41	+0.01	50.40	50.41	9,647,557	47.77-56.27
WIN	WINDSTREAM CORP	CL USD	11.39	+0.06	11.38	11.39	4,605,693	6.02-11.82

REAL ESTATE FACTS

By Bobby Smith

DOWN PAYMENT SOLUTIONS

One way to get the best mortgage terms is to make a down payment of at least twenty percent. That no only gets you a lower rate and monthly payment, but you'll also avoid additional PMI (private mortgage insurance) fees, and have "instant equity" in your home.

But what are your options if you can't manage twenty percent down? There are many federal, state and local programs that provide first-time homebuyers with assistance and great loan terms. One popular FHA (Federal Housing Administration) loan is the HUD 203 (b), which requires just 3% down and rolls the closing costs into the financed amount. If you're starting with a fixer-upper, you might consid-

er the HUD 203(k) loan. Traditionally, lenders don't provide a mortgage until repairs are completed, but buyers can't start repairs until they own the home. This FHA loan provides the entire amount for the purchase and the improvements, based on an estimate of the home's value after repairs.

Young first-time buyers could also get great terms if your parents can make the investment an down payment for you. Their good credit will guarantee the best terms, and you can buy them out over time or they can forgive a percentage of the loan each year. If the federal programs aren't for you, then the bank of Mom and Dad may be the next best thing!

Hodges

Real Estate

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COLDWELL BANKER

Dynamic Marriage September 13

When a man feels wanted, love and respected he can climb the highest mountains. When a woman is romanced, appreciated and valued, she'll not only scale that mountain with her man, she will carry his gear, hand wash his socks afterward and massage his shoulders with a smile.

This Dynamic Marriage course is designed to make good marriages better and infuse stagnant marriages with new passion and intimacy.

Dynamic Marriage will meet on Monday evenings for eight weeks and is limited to 12 couples. The course will be offered at Living Hope Church (across from the Laurel County Library) and will begin on September 13, 2010. Pre-registration is required to order materials. Materials must be ordered by August 30. Please register or send any questions to dynamicdotson@gmail.com.

What are you waiting for? Dive in and enjoy your life, together

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Adams Buick-GMC in Richmond, Kentucky would like to welcome Gerald Pierson to its service staff. Gerald lives in Annville, Kentucky and would like to invite all his Laurel County friends and neighbors to visit him in the Service Department at Adams. Gerald has 19 years experience in automotive service, and was a long time employee of Johnny Watkins Pontiac-Buick-GMC in London, Kentucky. To help welcome Gerald to our service team, clip this story from your paper and bring it in for an extra 10% off any service repairs you need Gerald to do!

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