



spotlight on health

Survey: Doctors And Patients Not Discussing Weight As A Health Issue

(NAPSA)—Obesity is the second leading cause of preventable death in the United States, but 57 percent of overweight people have never had a discussion about weight with their doctors.

A recent Roper Starch survey examined the level of communication about weight between doctors and patients. An estimated 62 percent of overweight people do not believe that their weight poses a serious health risk, even though being overweight or obese is a significant risk factor for type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

“These data show that both patients and physicians need to take a more active role in initiating a constructive dialogue about the health risks that extra weight carries,” said James Rippe, M.D., Associate Professor of Medicine (Cardiology) at Tufts University School of Medicine. “Through conversations with their physicians, people can learn about how to decrease their risk of serious weight-related conditions.”

Additional findings of the survey include:

- More than one-fifth (21 percent) of overweight people do not believe they need to lose weight, and one-quarter (25 percent) have never tried to lose weight.

- More than half (57 percent)

of overweight people, and more than one-third (37 percent) of people who qualify as obese, have not discussed weight with their doctors.

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- Three-quarters of currently overweight people (75 percent) have tried in the past to lose weight without the help of a doctor.

- When asked to explain why people are not discussing weight with their doctors, it appears that overweight people are underestimating the seriousness of weight problems; 49 percent feel they can lose weight on their own, 43 percent do not believe excess weight is serious enough to speak with a doctor about, and 29 percent say they are happy with their weight and don't care to lose any.

- Half (50 percent) of overweight people have not made any effort at all to seek information about diet and weight loss, and almost as many (45 percent) people who qualify as obese have not made such an effort.

- Patients are just as likely to get diet or weight loss information

from a friend or family member (48 percent) as they are from a doctor (47 percent). In addition, 40 percent stated they get their weight loss information from magazines, and 25 percent cited television.

Obesity in America

During the 1990's, the number of Americans classified as overweight or obese increased dramatically in every state independent of sex, race, age and educational level. According to a report published by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, more than 60 percent of adults in the U.S. are overweight or obese.

Being overweight is closely associated with serious, chronic conditions that can lead to death and disability. These include high blood pressure, blood cholesterol abnormalities, adult onset diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, gallbladder disease, arthritis of the knees and hips, sleep apnea and respiratory problems, and certain types of cancer.

To learn more about the risks of being overweight and the benefits of getting back to a healthy weight, consumers can log onto www.weightloss.com. The Roper Starch survey was conducted on behalf of Roche, makers of the prescription weight loss medication, Xenical.