

U of M study identifies factors associated with successful weight loss in teens

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Participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity and limiting time in front of the television are some of the keys to successful weight loss in teens, according to researchers at the University of Minnesota Medical School.

Research published in a recent issue of *Obesity* identified common factors among teens, ages 16 to 18, who successfully lost weight:

- Overweight teens who lost weight participated in significantly more moderate to vigorous physical activity than those who maintained the same weight or gained. Females who lost weight averaged 7.6 hours a week, and males 11.7 a week.
- Female adolescents who lost weight were more likely to participate in weight training and strengthening exercises.
- Teens who lost weight spent significantly less time in front of the television compared to those who gained weight.

"Today, nearly 31 percent of adolescents in the United States are considered overweight," said Kerri Boutelle, Ph.D., lead author of the study and assistant professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Minnesota Medical School. "It is clear that exercising, staying active, and limiting sedentary activity is essential to teens successfully losing weight."

According to the study, successful weight loss for overweight teens averaged 14 percent reduction of their body weight for females and 12 percent reduction for males within a year. The average weight loss met the 10 percent goal recommended for adults to experience the medical benefits of weight loss.

"The study gives researchers, clinicians, and parents a better understanding that teens can lose weight, and what behaviors are associated with success," said Boutelle.

Researchers analyzed data from 1,726 adolescents from the ages of 16 to 18 who completed a questionnaire and interview in the National Health and Nutrition Survey study from 1999 to 2002. Dietary intake, physical activity, and dieting attitudes were compared across the entire sample of teens, and then specifically compared in those who were considered overweight.

Source: University of Minnesota

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