

HALDIMAND-NORFOLK HEALTH UNIT

WORKPLACE HEALTH



WEIGHT Bias in the WORKPLACE

Weight bias against overweight and obese employees is a problem – and you could be unknowingly contributing to it. We often focus on the physical consequences of excess weight, but what about the psychological?

Weight bias refers to the negative stereotypes, stigma and discrimination faced by overweight and obese individuals. It involves forming unreasonable judgments about a person – both children and adults - solely based on their weight.

Many people believe that overweight and obesity is simply the result of a lack of willpower or self-control when really, so many biological, physical, environmental, psychological and other factors are at play. We tend to shame and blame the victim, thinking that this will motivate them to lose weight.

Weight bias puts the overweight or obese person at risk for serious psychological and emotional health issues like depression and decreases their quality of life. Some experts say that the prevalence of weight bias is comparable to racial discrimination of years past.

In the workplace, weight bias can take many forms. Overweight or obese employees may face unfair treatment in the following ways:

- They may be viewed by their employer and co-workers as lazy, less productive, less ambitious, undisciplined and less competent;
 - They may be less likely to be hired or promoted than thinner applicants, even with identical qualifications
 - They may earn lower wages compared to thinner employees; and
 - They may face harsher discipline and wrongful job termination compared to thinner employees.
- Weight bias is also prevalent in education, healthcare and the media.
- Here are some tips to reduce weight bias in the workplace:*
1. Remember that overweight and obesity is the result of many complex factors and not simply a sign of personal failure;
 2. Identify your own potential biases towards overweight and obesity and educate others about weight-based discrimination;
 3. Ensure fair interviewing, hiring and promotion practices for qualified candidates, regardless of body weight;
 4. Eliminate inequities for overweight or obese employees through sensitivity training for hiring staff and managers; and
 5. Include 'weight' in workplace anti-bullying and discrimination policies and investigate reports of weight-based

bullying promptly and effectively.

If you feel you've been treated unfairly at work because of your weight, you can register a formal complaint or bring the issue up with your supervisor if you're comfortable doing so. You could also speak with a human resources employee, a union representative, a trusted friend or the colleague who has treated you unfairly.

Reference:

Yale Rudd Centre for Food Policy and Obesity (2012).
Weight Bias & Stigma, Employers/Employees. Retrieved from <http://www.yaleruddcenter.org/>



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UPCOMING EVENTS



September:

- Sept. 9 – Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Day
- Sept. 10 – World Suicide Prevention Day
- Sept. 16 – Terry Fox Run
- Sept. 30 – Run for the Cure

October:

- Sept. 30-Oct. 6 – National Breastfeeding Week
- Oct. 17 – Workplace Health Networking Sessions
- Oct. 25 – Prenatal Fair (Vittoria)

November:

- Nov. 14 – World Diabetes Day
- Nov. 20 – National Child Day

CHECK 'EM.



Research shows that many men do not see their doctor or health care provider (HCP) on a regular basis. Young men, and men in general, tend to ignore health problems until they become acute. All men, from the time they are 15 years old, should be aware of how their testicles normally look and feel. Knowing what is normal and reporting any changes to a doctor may help find cancer earlier. Early detection of testicular cancer can make a difference in the treatment of the disease.

What is TSE (Testicular Self Exam) and why should men do it?

TSE is a simple and effective way for men to recognize the early signs and symptoms of testicular cancer. Testicular cancer is one of the most frequently occurring types of cancer in men ages 18 to 35 and can occur anytime after the age of 15. And if it is caught early, testicular cancer is one of the most curable forms of cancer.

When should I perform TSE and how often?

TSE should be performed once a month after a warm bath or shower. The heat causes the scrotal skin to relax, making it easier to find anything unusual. The procedure itself is simple and should only take a few minutes. It may help you to remember to do TSE if you choose a date each month that's easy to remember like your birth date or the first of each month. Performing TSE on a regular basis will allow you to become familiar with the size and feeling of your testicles and can help you detect any changes if they occur.

How do I perform TSE and what am I looking for?

TSE is simple to perform and can quickly become a part of your routine. You can also ask your partner if they would perform TSE for you.

- Examine each testicle separately.
- Using both hands, put your thumbs on top of the testicle and the pads of your fingers under and behind the testicle.
- Gently slide or roll the skin of the scrotum across the testicle. Do not rub.
- Examine the entire area of the testicle. The surface should feel smooth, without lumps or

tenderness.

- Feel the side of the testicle closest to the body for the epididymis. The epididymis is a comma-shaped, cord-like tube that stores and transports sperm. Don't mistake the "lump" of the epididymis for an abnormal lump. Cancerous lumps are more commonly found at the front of the testicle. If you're not sure if you have felt the epididymis or a lump, make an appointment at Health Services. You can request a medical provider by name or gender.

It is normal for a man's testicles to be different sizes, and for one to hang lower and a bit behind the other. The scrotum regulates the heat of the testicles by relaxing and lowering the testicles away from the body when they are warm, and contracting and pulling the testicles up close to the body when they are cold. This temperature regulation is necessary for sperm production.

When performing TSE you are looking for:

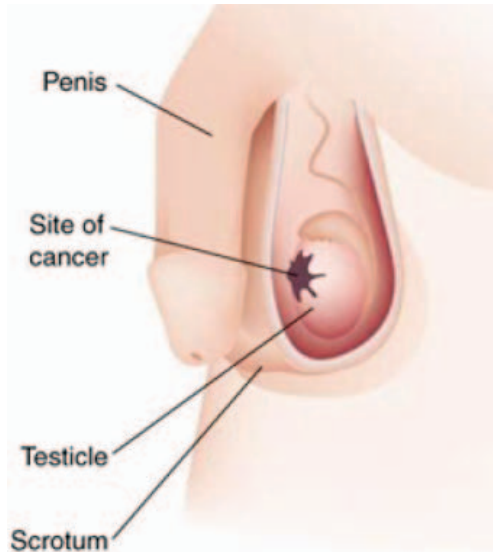
- Small, hard, non-tender lump or nodule in the testicle
- Change in the way the testicle feels or in its consistency
- Enlarged testicle and/or a feeling of extra heaviness in the testicle
- Dull ache in the lower abdomen or groin.

What does it mean if I find a lump?

Lumps are not always cancer. However, if you notice a lump, enlargement, tenderness or other unexplained changes in your testicles, talk to your medical provider right away.

If you are diagnosed with testicular cancer, the good news is that it is more than 95% curable when detected and treated early. However, testicular cancer may spread rapidly if detection and treatment is delayed.

Testicular cancer almost always occurs in only one testicle. Only 2% of men diagnosed with testicular cancer will develop a new tumor in the other testicle. Because the testes do not readily take in anticancer drugs, treatment of testicular cancer typically necessitates surgical removal of the affected testicle. While this thought makes most men apprehensive, be assured that one healthy testicle is sufficient for full sexual and reproductive function.



See your doctor if you have:

- a lump on the testicle
- a painful testicle
- a feeling of heaviness or dragging in the lower abdomen or scrotum
- a dull ache in the lower abdomen and groin

Have regular medical checkups and report any changes to your doctor as soon as possible.

Information obtained from: Canadian Cancer Society, The Canadian Testicular Cancer Association, Medline Plus

FOR MEN ONLY: Are we pregnant yet?

There is more to male reproductive health than getting sperm to the right place at the right time. Your overall health and choices impact the ability of your partner getting pregnant. 47% of infertility is related to poor sperm quality. Healthy Lifestyle habits and environment can make your sperm friendly.

- Alcohol can lessen your sperm quality and cause a poor love making performance
- Smoking slows the speed of the sperm making it difficult to get into the woman's egg
- Follow Canada's food guide, a healthy fed body equals healthy sperm
- Keep away from heroin, cocaine and marijuana. These will lessen sperm count and inhibit sexual desire
- Medications and infectious diseases can affect your chances for making a pregnancy happen. Speak to your health care provider if you have any concerns.

How to make plans for a pregnancy

- research your family history for possible genetic concerns
- be aware of environmental risks
- talk to your partner
- eat well, exercise regularly and do not abuse alcohol or drugs

References: www.beststart.org retrieved July 30, 2008



RECIPE

Butternut Squash and Pear Soup

Ingredients:

- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1 cup finely chopped onion
- 1 tbsp curry powder
- 1 pound butternut squash (about half a medium squash), cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 ripe medium Bartlett pears, peeled, cored and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 3 1/2 cups fat-free, low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth

Preparation:

Heat oil on medium heat in Dutch oven or soup pot. Gently sauté onions until softened—about 5 minutes. Add curry powder and stir, sautéing for 1 minute. Add butternut squash and pear pieces. Sauté for 3-4 minutes. Pour in chicken broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer for 20 minutes until squash and pear are tender. Transfer soup to a food processor or blender and purée until smooth.

Serves 6

Reference – About.com Low Fat Cooking

Celebrate Canada's Healthy Workplace Month – October 1-28

Life, Work, Harmony – Working Toward a Great Life

A healthy workplace is one that focuses on healthy lifestyles, occupational health and safety, and organizational culture. A healthy workplace is also a place where individuals and the organization both thrive and take responsibility for improving their own health, as well as creating a healthy workplace environment – healthy people in healthy organizations.

The goals of Canada's Healthy Workplace Month® (CHWM) are to increase awareness of a comprehensive approach to workplace health in Canada that involves three elements of a healthy workplace:

- health and lifestyle practices
- workplace culture and a supportive environment
- physical environment and occupational health and safety

Challenge yourself and your workplace with weekly activities!

The Weekly Challenge Themes:

Week 1: Taking Action on Your Mental Health (Oct. 1 -7)

Gain a better understanding of the importance of employee mental health

Week 2: Improving your Workplace Culture (Oct. 8-14)

Find ways to make the working environment more open, fair and positive

Week 3: Making our Workplace Resilient (Oct. 15-21)

Discover ways to get back on track

Week 4: Keeping our Workplace Safe (Oct. 22-28)

Increase your knowledge on workplace safety

Register your workplace by visiting <http://healthyworkplacemonth.ca/en/>

For more information or to find out more about how your workplace can get involved, contact: Jennifer Moore, Workplace Health Promoter
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