Suggested Citation: Weight Management Information and Mini-Lesson
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WEIGHT MANAGEMENT INFORMATION
and
MINI-LESSON

Keeping a proper weight is important to good overall health, longevity, preventing many illnesses and debilitating health conditions, including diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, heart disease, many cancers, and arthritis.

Weight management is a complicated and multi-faceted endeavor. While the tools in this section can be helpful for people who wish to lose weight, it should be emphasized that this information is a starting point for a longer effort to reduce weight and the health risks associated with overweight and obesity.

THE MATERIALS:

- **“Making Ends Meet” Waist Ribbons**: Weight control information for health professionals, including an easy-to-make “tool” for helping people assess and track their abdominal weight loss.
- **Mini-Lesson: Healthy Changes for Your Weight**: A short lesson on basic lifestyle changes that people can make to lose weight and become healthier, overall.

INSTRUCTORS include nutritionists, Community Health Workers, community volunteers, medical staff, and anyone who educates or counsels patients and community members.

PARTICIPANTS include community members of all ages and medical patients. This lesson is also appropriate for any small group meeting: clubs, churches, civic groups, or other community gathering.

Those who utilize the Weight Information and Mini-Lesson materials are asked to comment on their experiences. Please contact Susan G. Landgren, MS, RDN, sglandgren@gmail.com
“Making Ends Meet” Waist Ribbons
(Information for Health Professionals)

Mini-Lesson: Healthy Changes for Your Weight

Poster: Healthy Changes
Located at the end of this module.
“MAKING ENDS MEET” WAIST RIBBONS
Improving Health Through Waist Measurement Ribbons

WHAT ARE THEY?
“Making Ends Meet” ribbons are pre-cut to measure the maximum recommended waist circumference for men and women. If a person’s waist measurement is greater than what the ribbons can measure, then they may be at risk for obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?
A large waistline can increase a person’s risk of diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. It also may mean that a person is overweight or obese, which also increases their risks of these diseases. People who reduce the size of their waist will be healthier.

HOW IS IT DONE?
- **Making the ribbons**: Use non-stretchy ribbon or thin rope. Cut the ribbon or rope into pieces that measure 90 cm for men, 80 cm for women.*
- **To measure men and women**: Place the pre-cut ribbon or rope evenly around the bare abdomen, just above the hip bone. Be sure people have relaxed their abdominal muscles. The ribbon or rope should be snug, but not cinched into the skin. (see illustration below)
- **Results**: If the ends of the ribbon or rope meet, then that person has a lower risk of diabetes and heart disease. But, if the ends of the ribbon or rope do not meet, then they have a higher risk of those illnesses.
- **Afterwards**: For those who have larger waists (the ends of their ribbons did not meet), suggest ways that they can improve their health (see Mini-Lesson: Healthy Changes for Your Weight; Poster: Healthy Changes). Challenge them to lose weight so that their ribbons “make ends meet” in 2-3 months. If there are sufficient ribbons for everyone, give people ribbons to take home. They can use them once a month to see if they are “making ends meet” through making “Healthy Changes”.

*Images not provided in text.
Waist circumference recommendations by ethnic background:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Males (cm)</th>
<th>Females (cm)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South, Central Americans</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asians</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africans</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern, Eastern European, North African</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europeans</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA (ATP III); Canadians (EPIC)</td>
<td>102; 90</td>
<td>88; 85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: International Diabetes Federation (except when noted). IDF, 2005
MINI LESSON: HEALTHY CHANGES FOR YOUR WEIGHT

MAIN MESSAGES:

• **A smaller waist will mean that you are healthier** - you will have less risk of having diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. Also, smaller waists usually mean that you are not overweight. Being overweight or obese increases your chances of developing diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, arthritis, and many cancers.

• **A few small changes in the way that you live can help you to avoid diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and to lose weight.**

LESSON:

1) Review the “Healthy Changes” chart with participants. Emphasize the Main Messages above.

2) Ask each person: “WHAT ARE 2 CHANGES THAT YOU DO RIGHT NOW THAT WOULD HELP YOU BECOME HEALTHIER?”

3) Each person identifies and states 2 changes that they could realistically make. Example: eat more vegetables from the garden, don’t drink sodas and sweet drinks)

“HEALTHY CHANGES” CHART INFORMATION:

• **Choose to eat MORE:**
  ✓ Fruits, vegetables.
  ✓ Beans, lentils, maiz, oats.
  
  *These foods have fiber, vitamins, and minerals that can keep people healthy.*

• **Choose to eat LESS:**
  ✓ Sugary foods: sweets, candies, cookies, postres, ice cream.
  ✓ Sodas, sweet drinks.
  ✓ Fatty foods: lard, butter, fried foods, fatty meats and sausages.
  ✓ Salty foods: adding salt to meals, chips, fries.
  
  *These foods increase your risks of diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, obesity, and some cancers.*

• **Be as ACTIVE as you can be!**

  *Exercise is your best “medicine” for losing weight, avoiding many illnesses, and just staying well!*

• **SLEEP long and sleep well.** Try to sleep at least 8 hours a night.
HEALTHY CHANGES

How you eat and exercise affects your health. What are 2 changes that you can make now that can reduce your risk of heart disease, diabetes, and obesity?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eat MORE</th>
<th>Eat LESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRUITS</strong></td>
<td><strong>SUGAR</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VEGETABLES</strong></td>
<td><strong>SODAS, SWEET DRINKS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BEANS, LENTILS, MAIZ</strong></td>
<td><strong>FATTY FOODS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WALK EVERY DAY!</strong></td>
<td><strong>SLEEP long and well!</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>