

## Why are my eyes itchy?

Itchy eyes are a symptom of eye allergies (allergic conjunctivitis).

There are two common types of eye allergies: seasonal and perennial. Seasonal eye allergies typically cause itchy eyes in the spring and can occur again in the fall. Seasonal allergies are usually



Dr. Rebecca Wincek Bateson has a private practice at 678 Philadelphia St. and practices optometry with Dr. Mike Yuhas and Dr. Greg Caldwell.

due to exposure to allergens such as grass, tree and weed pollen. Perennial eye allergies can cause itchy eyes that persist throughout the year and are usually due to exposure to household allergens such as mold, dust, animal hair

and pet dander, to name a few.

### What causes the itching?

When the surface of our eye is exposed to an allergen like pollen, dust or pet dander, an allergic reaction can occur. The allergic reaction triggers the release of histamines (a chemical released in your body) that causes itchy, red or watery eyes.

### Helpful hints to preventing itchy eyes.

Inside your home, vacuum regularly to reduce indoor allergens such as dust and pet dander. Shut windows to keep out seasonal allergens. Air conditioning helps to filter out allergens, so clean filters and air ducts regularly. Keep pets out of bedrooms if pet dander or animal hair is a problem. Outside: Check the pollen count before going outside; these counts are usually highest between 5 a.m. and 10 a.m.

Avoid hanging laundry outside, because allergens stick to fabric. Take precautions before doing yard work — wearing a simple respirator or face mask will help filter out allergens while mowing the lawn, raking leaves or gardening.

Shower after being outdoors to wash away allergens that may have collected in your hair or on your skin.

### What not to do.

It's tempting to rub your eyes to make them feel better. But rubbing releases more histamine (the chemical that causes the itching in the first place).

In addition, rubbing may cause trauma to the eye surface and eyelid.

### Treatment.

First, see your eye doctor to correctly diagnose your condition and to receive appropriate treatment. There are many treatments for itchy eyes and all are available through your eye doctor. A prescription eye drop in most cases is the best treatment to control your short- and long-term symptoms.

Depending on the severity of your condition, your eye doctor may need to prescribe anti-inflammatory eye drops or even a steroid to control your allergies.

Only he or she will know the best treatment for you. Many over the counter eye drops that relieve itchy eyes also contain a medication that is a vasoconstrictor. A vasoconstrictor reduces the redness in your eyes only temporarily by narrowing the blood vessels. With overuse, this can worsen your symptoms and cause rebound redness, leaving your eyes red for an extended period of time after discontinuing the medication. It is best to see your eye doctor so that he or she can find the best prescription treatment options tailored to your symptoms.

If you have any questions concerning your eye allergies e-mail [Becca@indianaeye.com](mailto:Becca@indianaeye.com). Dr. Rebecca Wincek Bateson has a private practice located at 678 Philadelphia St. and practices optometry with Dr. Mike Yuhas and Dr. Greg Caldwell.

# Fat-and-fit movement growing in U.S.

By SHEBA R. WHEELER  
The Denver Post

Anxiety about an "obesity epidemic" continues to grow in response to almost weekly alarms and studies that report more than half of the U.S. adult population is now overweight or obese. At the same time, the body-acceptance movement is surging, promoting the message of loving yourself and maintaining a positive self-image no matter your size, thin or heavy-set.

Caught in those contradictions are people like Jeannie Troy, who feels like she is treading water in both turbulent streams.

"I'm obese, but I'm absolutely fit," says the 47-year-old Thornton resident, who at barely 5 feet tall and just under 200 pounds, still has healthy blood pressure, can swim for two hours, takes a three-hour dance class and enjoys biking and hiking.

"I'm not using up health care dollars; I don't lose workdays; and all of my checkups say I'm healthy in spite of being fat. I'm living my life now, not 50 or 100 pounds from now."

Can you be both fat and fit? Research continues to tip the scale in favor of "yes."

There are many people living the "obesity paradox," says Paul Campos, a University of Colorado law professor and author of "The Obesity Myth." They are technically outside the government's approved weight range but have bodies that are metabolically fit due to healthy eating and fitness routines. The notion that everyone can — and should — be thin is a product of political distortion and cultural panic over body diversity, he says.

"The biggest factor in terms of health risk for any person is age, not weight," says Campos.

Widely held misconceptions that thin people are naturally healthy and fat people are unfit because of poor eating and workout habits are so pervasive that it took Troy decades to stop hating herself.

Considered overweight since grammar school, Troy found that

the more diets she attempted, the more her weight increased. Even though she weighed 280 pounds in her late 30s, she felt invisible. Other times, her mind told her that everyone was staring at her, making her afraid to eat in restaurants.

"I was living in my head the whole time, and my life was very disconnected from my neck down," says Troy, who has been in therapy the past year with Boulder psychotherapist Carmen Cool, who specializes in female clients dealing with weight issues. "Carmen is helping me realize how my thoughts impacted my body, how telling myself that I couldn't do things because I was fat stopped me from doing them."

With Cool's recommendation, Troy spent a month in March at a women's fitness and weight-loss retreat called Green Mountain at Fox Run in Vermont. The "transformative experience" helped bring her body and mind into accord.

"I remember the exact day when I said I loved my body," she says. "I was swimming in a pool, and when I came up I was crying. I was amazed that I was able to swim and that my body really could do these amazing things. I loved it because it could."

Troy has found that when she eats normally and naturally, paying attention to when her body is full or hungry, she has been able to lose weight without dieting. Her weight has leveled out at around 200 pounds.

"It's been up and down, but when I treat myself kindly and I move instead of being obsessed with counting calories, the weight comes off," Troy says.

When individuals honor and feel good about themselves, they are motivated to make better choices for their health, says Linda Bacon, a researcher, professor and author based outside of Berkeley, Calif.

Bacon's book, "Health at Every Size: The Surprising Truth About Your Weight," has been pushing a new movement that emphasizes healthy habits for well-being

## Some say fat and fit is impossible

By SHEBA R. WHEELER  
The Denver Post

Is it possible to be fat but fit?

It's not, says Michael Karolchik, a gym instructor and owner of the Anti-Gym Revolution fitness centers in California known for their inflammatory "No Chubbies" advertisements.

"People say I'm a fat hater, but the real haters are those that keep lying to them, telling them that they are healthy and beautiful," says Karolchik. "They are excusing the fact that they are lazy, eat too much and don't work out enough so they won't have to confront the fact that their behaviors are leading to their death."

But a new study found evidence that people who carry a little extra weight tended to live longer than people who were either underweight, normal weight or obese.

And data released in spring in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology suggested that obese patients with heart disease responded to treatment better and lived longer than leaner patients with the same disease.

Overweight is defined as having a body mass index of 25 to 29.9, while obesity is anything above 30. BMI measures weight relative to height and waist circumference.

BMI has been widely criticized for its inability to distinguish between muscle or fat. Consequently, many professional athletes are technically obese despite their fitness routines.

rather than weight control.

If the nation is really concerned about public health, the focus needs to be on getting people to engage in healthier habits, Bacon says.

Her 2005 study found that people who participated in a diet and exercise program lost weight early on and saw decreases in blood pressure, cholesterol and depression. But two years later, they gained the weight back and lost any health improvements. Meanwhile, members of a test group who practiced Health at Every Size tenets sustained their weight loss and continued to exercise.

"We can benefit both fat and thin people by shifting the focus from weight loss to healthy living," Bacon says. "A lot of people say this is about giving up. When

you accept yourself, it's about moving on and making peace with it so you are empowered to make better choices."

"The fatosphere," a growing online community, has been pivotal in shifting awareness from size and self-hatred to health and acceptance, says Emme, a television personality, author, fashion designer and outspoken plus-size proponent.

"The reason this shift is happening is because women are using their voice online," says Emme, the host of the new Fox reality dating show, "More to Love."

"The truth of the matter is that we do come in different shapes, body types and bone structures. There is no one-size-fits-all, period — for shape, size or health."

Leianne Hazen, 46, of

While it is clear the BMI misclassifies some, it is still a useful measurement for the majority of Americans who suffer from an "epidemic of poor fitness," no matter their size, says James Hill, director of the Center for Human Nutrition at the University of Colorado Denver.

In his weight-loss research as co-founder of America on the Move, Hill says he rarely sees obese individuals who are fit.

"We still have a serious crisis in this country with obesity," Hill says, noting that only one-third of Americans are at a healthy weight and there are more people now who are morbidly obese, weighing more than 300 to 400 pounds.

But Hill does agree that it is possible to be obese and fit if you use other measures for defining fitness. For example, a smaller waist circumference and a high BMI suggests that person might be fit, carrying extra muscle instead of fat. Body strength and cardio-respiratory fitness can be evaluated, as well as lipid and blood-sugar levels. The best advice is to be active and aim for small changes with big impact, Hill says. Shooting for a 10 percent drop in weight is a reasonable goal that immediately reduces the risk of diabetes and heart disease and lowers blood pressure.

"Because of genetics and the huge role it plays in body weight, you might never be at a healthy BMI because your genes won't let you," Hill says. "Your goal should be to increase fitness no matter your BMI."

Jamestown, credits therapy with Cool, support on the Internet and books such as "Lessons From the Fat-O-Sphere" for her mental and physical successes. While overweight and diabetic, Hazen has cut her blood-sugar level nearly in half over six months, and it is now in the normal range, thanks to regular activity. Hazen says her doubters will get their just deserts when they learn that she was able to reap the health benefits of exercise and not lose any weight.

"It helps you know you are not alone and that I'm not crazy to think that I can be this large and still do things to improve my health," says Hazen, who enjoys lengthening and strengthening her 5-foot-10-1/2-inch frame with Qigong movements and swimming.

# Seven myths uncovered about Type 1 diabetes

■ **EDITOR'S NOTE:** The following article was submitted by Heather Porter, of Indiana, a member of the planning group for this Saturday's Step Out to Fight Diabetes at Blue Spruce Park. Porter was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes 25 years ago at age 13.

By HEATHER PORTER  
Special to the Gazette

### 1. Type 1 diabetes (Juvenile Diabetes) is caused by eating too much sugar or not exercising enough.

Type 1 diabetes is when the pancreas (the organ that produces insulin) stops working. In order to survive, Type 1 diabetics have to administer insulin via daily shots or an insulin pump. Type 1 is *not* reversible or preventable like Type 2. The Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation states that 90 percent of Type 1 diabetics have no relative with the disease.

### 2. Type 1 diabetics cannot eat sugar.

In the past doctors felt diabetics should avoid sugar because it would bring sugar levels up too high (Diabetesmellitus.com). New research has revealed that carbohydrates have the same effect as sugar on blood glucose levels. Type 1 diabetics are taught to count carbohydrates and put in insulin based on a doctor's recommendations. Nick Jonas from the Jonas Brothers, also a Type 1 diabetic, writes on DiabetesHealth.com that he doesn't follow a special diet because "as long as you give the right amount of insulin, you can eat whatever you want." When asked the question, can diabetics eat candy on facts-about-diabetes.com, the answer is "yes." We also check our blood sugars (glucose levels) frequently to make sure we maintain levels within normal range.

### 3. Type 1 Diabetics should not have children.

The ADA notes on their Web site that Type 1 diabetics are lucky to live in the time that we do because health care providers no longer discourage women with diabetes from becoming pregnant. If you are a Type 1 diabetic and are considering getting pregnant, it is very important to check with your doctor first. My first two children were born at Johns Hopkins University Hospital under the care of an OB/GYN who managed only pregnant diabetics. Tight control was imperative for me to have healthy children and remain healthy myself.

### 4. Insulin pumps are for people who have very little control over their blood sugar.

Today, Type 1 diabetics are offered the pump soon after their diagnosis. The pump offers tighter control (meaning blood sugar levels are within normal range at all times). Tighter control can prevent complications and provide a healthier lifestyle.

Insulin pumps are the size of cell phones and there are several different models. My pump connects underneath my clothes on my undergarment. A small tube is attached and has a flexible, small "needle" that attaches into my hip or my stomach (whichever I prefer). This is called the "site." The site needs to be changed at least every 3-4 days by the diabetic. Changing the site feels like a small pinch but is painless once inserted.

### 5. If Type 1 diabetics have too much sugar in their system, how come I see them eating candy bars or juice, saying "they are shaky"?

Bobby Clarke, one of the greatest NHL players who played for the Philadelphia Flyers, was diagnosed at a young age with Type 1 diabetes. He was also famous

for drinking a bottle of Coca Cola with three spoons of dissolved sugar before a game, drink a half-glass of orange juice with sugar added between periods, and then a full glass following the game. The Flyers trainer would also keep chocolate bars and a tube of glucose in his bag on hand in case of an emergency.

Symptoms such as sweating, confusion, clumsiness are classic signs that we call "getting shaky" and immediately need to test our blood sugar level. If we are below normal range, we should eat or drink anything containing quick sugar (sugar liquids digest faster) to get our sugar level up immediately, followed by a more complex carbohydrate, such as bread, low-fat yogurt or apples. Bottom line: If we do not reverse the hypoglycemic symptoms, we could experience seizures, fall into a coma and die.

### 6. We cannot live a normal life

I was diagnosed at age 13 on July 26, 1984. I am celebrating my 25th year with Juvenile (Type 1) Diabetes. I have always felt secure with having Type 1 diabetes

because unlike a lot of other diseases, I know I have a good amount of control over my future. We do have to plan ahead almost on an hourly basis and have to be very aware of our body and our surroundings. Life with diabetes has gotten so much better over the past century and a cure is only a step away.

### 7. Small towns cannot raise much money to help find the cure for diabetes.

The ADA Indiana Walk committee meets monthly to get ready for the annual Step Out to Fight Diabetes. This year it will be on Saturday at Blue Spruce Park. Registration starts at 12:30 p.m. and the nice stroll around the lake starts at 2 p.m. with lunch served afterward.

Our goal this year is \$120,855. The goal given to us is based on the fact that the ADA believes we can do it. We are on the same level as cities like Richmond, Va., and Rochester, N.Y. Our county with a population of under 90,000 is on the same level as those with 200,000 or more people. Once we reach this goal, it

will be an awesome achievement. If you feel like donating today, know that when the cure is found, you have played a crucial part in finding it!

If you would like to participate in the Indiana Walk and/or donate to the ADA Indiana Walk, you can call the Center for Diabetes Care at IRMC at (724) 357-7164 or go online at [www.diabetes.org/stepout](http://www.diabetes.org/stepout).

If you would like to donate offline, you can make out a check to the "ADA" and send it to American Diabetes Association, Attention: Indiana Step Out, 300 Penn Center Blvd., Suite 602, Pittsburgh, PA 15235. The ADA will take donations for the Indiana walk until Dec. 31.

**Home Health Answers**

Presented by  
**Linda Bettinazzi**  
President/CEO

### Feeling Down

It is common for older adults to feel a sense of loneliness and depression because of declining health, withdrawal from social activities, or loss of loved ones. Many seniors spend long periods of time at home alone. Depression in older adults can take a heavy toll on their health. It is important for seniors who are suffering from depression or despair to see their doctor. In many cases, in-home care and companionship can help to make a difference. The older adult and their family will take comfort in knowing that they have someone there to listen and help them with daily activities. Friendship and trust develops as the home care worker provides services such as grooming, bathing, meals, errands, groceries, transportation, and of course, making sure the older adult is healthy and safe. In-home care offers compassionate support that can be a great value.

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**Exercise & Lower Colon Cancer Risk**

Colon cancer is the third most common type of cancer and it's estimated it will kill about 50,000 people in the U.S. this year. A recent analysis of over 52 studies found that people who are the most physically active are 24% less likely to develop colon cancer than those who are the least active. The protective effect held for **all** types of physical activity whether it was recreational or related to their job. If you are over 50, talk with your doctor about regular colon cancer screening.

By Rob Kasisky, R.P.H.

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