

FP Takes Own Fitness Rx

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exercise and diet and dispelling myths. "Everyone's trying to sell something so you get a lot of mixed messages," she said.

About 65% of U.S. adults age 20 years and older are overweight or obese, and 16% of children and adolescents aged 6-19 years are overweight, according to the latest data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. The medical and related costs of obesity in this country were more than \$117 billion in 2000, according to the U.S. Surgeon General.

With overweight and obesity becoming a growing health concern, the exercise class has become a tool for Dr. Rashid when he speaks to patients about the complications that come from being overweight and the need to exercise. He and his colleagues encourage patients who want to lose weight to check out the class. They also advertise the class in the waiting room.

"The physician plays a big role in encouraging people," he said.

His exercise class has some unique bonuses not found at a gym or community center. For starters, it's free. And it includes supervision by a physician.

But the class is about more than teaching exercise and fitness, Dr. Rashid said. It's also a way to reach out to the community and show that he and his practice partners are there to help.

Physicians are only limited by their imaginations in what they can do to encourage fitness among their patients, said Michael O. Fleming, M.D., past president

of the American Academy of Family Physicians and a family physician in Shreveport, La.

For example, his office staff has a "dump that frump" program they started for staff members, where teams use pedometers to record the number of steps they take daily and aim to have the largest number. They expanded the program to include patients and now more than 280 patients have joined the teams.

They have also made an effort to en-

courage patients to use the stairs during their visits to the two-floor office.

Most patients really want to lose weight but the inertia keeps them from doing it. "Those are excuses, those aren't reasons," Dr. Fleming said.

Although physicians can still do more in their efforts to promote healthier lifestyles, Dr. Fleming, said there have been improvements in the past 2 years. Until quite recently, most physicians would not even bring up the topic of weight; now it's a common part of the conversation, he said.

AAFP is promoting healthy lifestyles for physicians and patients as part of its Americans in Motion initiative, a 10-year

effort that began in 2003. This summer, the academy plans to distribute tool kits to physicians to help with discussions on nutrition and fitness both in the office and the community.

The tool kits are slated to include a body mass index measuring tool, an office waiting room poster on health and fitness, a food and activity tracker for patients to chronicle daily food intake and physical activity, and health guides that will give practical advice for patients on their weight management plan. The kit will also include fitness prescription pads for physicians to prescribe fitness-related activities to their patients. ■

'Behind Counter' Sales of Plan B Okayed in Canada


Canada has approved the sale of the emergency contraceptive levonorgestrel 0.75 mg (Plan B) without a prescription. The product will be available "behind the counter," allowing pharmacists to provide women with the drug.

Until now, the contraceptive product has been available in most provinces by prescription only, except for Quebec, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan, where women can access the product through pharmacists.

The Canadian decision comes as the Food and Drug Administration is considering whether to allow the sale of Plan B without a prescription for women aged 16 years and older.

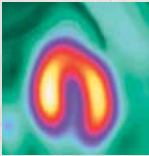
"We are pleased that Canadian regulatory authorities have recognized that Plan B is safe and effective for use by women as emergency contraceptive and will make it available without a prescription," said Bruce L. Downey, chairman and CEO of Barr Laboratories Inc., the company that markets Plan B in the United States. "Canada now becomes the 34th country that enables women to have more timely access to emergency contraception without a prescription."

—Mary Ellen Schneider



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Please see brief summary of prescribing information on adjacent page. Patent protected to 2015.


1. Wackers FJ, In: Dilsizian V, et al, eds. *Atlas of Nuclear Cardiology*. Philadelphia, Pa: Current Medicine Inc; 2003:76-77.

2. Cerqueira MD, et al. *J Am Coll Cardiol*. 1994;23:384-389.

3. Klocke FJ, et al. *Circulation*. 2003;108:1404-1418.

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