Welcome to the first issue of HEAR for 2017. The purpose of HEAR is to provide specialised information to health professionals, patients and the public about key health topics. Each issue is the result of the collaborative effort of librarians from health organisations across Ireland.

This month, the focus is on Obesity. January seemed to be the most appropriate month for this topic as media and advertisers go overboard with “solutions” to the obesity crisis—from the helpful to the dangerous or the just plain crazy.

Should you wish to make any suggestions for future editions of HEAR, we would love to hear from you, please Email Us.

FAST FACTS on Obesity

Did you know that, according to the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing led by Trinity College, Dublin, four out of five of the over-50s in Ireland are overweight or obese?

OVER A THIRD of 15-24 year olds drink sugar-sweetened drinks most days of the week or daily, according to new data from the Institute of Public Health in Ireland.

“Overweight” is clinically defined by a Body Mass Index (BMI) — a measure relating height and weight — of 25 to 29.9, and “obese” by a BMI of 30 and above.

Based on World Health Organisation Research, overweight and obesity are linked to more deaths worldwide than underweight.

Costs for treating obesity in Ireland is estimated at €0.4 billion (Irish Heart Foundation Obesity Fact Sheet)

The Special Action Group on Obesity (SAGO) ... is concentrating on a range of measures including publishing calorie counts on menus in restaurants, the supply of healthy food products in vending machines in schools, healthy eating guidelines.

Worldwide obesity has more than doubled since 1980. (WHO Media Centre)
See where you fit on the “Global Fat Scale”, try this quick quiz

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HEALTHY BITES

RECENT PAPERS ON DIET & NUTRITION


Research from Ireland


RCPI Policy Group on Obesity: An expert report on how to clinically manage and treat obesity in Ireland; October 2015


Tackling Obesity in Ireland

Healthy Ireland: Obesity Policy

From the Department of Health: Obesity Policy & Action Plan 2016-2025

Childhood Obesity Campaign, ROI. “Your Child’s Weight”

Latest Evidence


- NICE Clinical guideline [CG189] Obesity: identification, assessment and management Published date: November 2014


Taking off just 10% of your body weight goes a long way towards being healthier, lowering blood pressure, cholesterol, and triglycerides levels.

Obesity reduces life expectancy by an average of 3 to 10 years, depending on how severe it is. It’s estimated that obesity and being overweight contribute to at least 1 in every 13 deaths in Europe.

Day-to-day problems related to obesity include: Breathlessness; increased sweating; snoring; difficulty doing physical activity; often feeling very tired; joint and back pain; low confidence and self-esteem; feeling isolated.

“Wondering if you’re eating healthy? Take this quiz to test your nutrition IQ!” From the American Heart Association.

Or try the University of California Berkley Wellness Quiz.

And one for the kids from the Australian Government “Healthy Kids” site.

Feeling ‘better’

The physical and health rewards of losing weight were described as ‘awesome’, ‘amazing’, ‘unbelievable’ by some young people. Changes young people noticed since losing weight included:

- Having more energy
- Sleeping better and waking up feeling rested and in a good mood
- Having fewer aches and pains
- Improved ability to move and get around
- Finding it easier to breathe
- Improved immune system (ability to fight off illness)

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Hunger and Obesity? Making the Connections (from the Centre for Science in the Public Interest). Excerpt:

- Hunger and obesity often occur within the same populations — even the same families.
- Both hunger and obesity can be consequences of low income and the resulting lack of access to enough food.
- High levels of stress, poor access to health care, and ways that households are forced to manage their limited resources compound these income and access gaps — and contribute to obesity.
- Studies show that participation in federal nutrition programs can combat both hunger and obesity.”
Self-help Books


Weight Loss Surgery Cookbook for Dummies By Brian K. Davidson, David Fouts, Karen Myers
(You may be able to download the 1st edition of the entire book at: http://www.edu12345.com/fujian/shu/jfsssp.pdf)


Bodywhys—the Eating Disorder Association of Ireland: Binge Eating: Breaking the Cycle: A self-help guide towards recovery

Easy Reading “Obesity”
In the News

Over the past few years, the topics of obesity, weight and diet have rarely been out of the news. Below are some examples. Wherever an “unusual” headline has occurred, a link to the facts behind the headlines has been attached.

22/9/16: Ministers Launch “A Healthy Weight for Ireland: Obesity Policy and Action Plan 2016-2025” “The economic cost of obesity for adults in 2009 was estimated to have been €1.13 bn.” Minister Corcoran Kennedy

15/09/15: “Portion size key in tackling obesity, says study.” BBC News. For what gave rise to this headline, see: http://www.nhs.uk/news/2015/09September/Pages/Decreasing-portion-sizes-could-cut-obesity-levels.aspx

06/05/15: Ireland set to be most obese country in Europe, WHO says Irish men at forefront of trend, leading an ‘overweight’ table of 53 countries

18/04/15: “Six categories of obesity, and just as many ways to treat it.” The Times. This claim is analysed here: http://www.nhs.uk/news/2015/04April/Pages/There-are-six-different-types-of-obesity-study-argues.aspx

01/04/16: Irish women second most obese in Europe by 2025 - report.

11/01/17: “Alcohol flips brain into hungry mode.” BBC News

15/01/17: 8 Things You Did not Know About Irish Obesity.


27/04/15: “Have scientists found a way to banish hunger pangs? Breakthrough could help dieters lose more weight - and make them less grumpy.” Mail Online. For the facts behind this headline see: http://www.nhs.uk/news/2015/04April/Pages/Brains-hunger-hub-could-be-switched-off.aspx

05/05/16: “Is obesity CONTAGIOUS? Spores of bacteria from guts of fat people 'could spread to healthy individuals'.” Mail Online. The story is analysed here: http://www.nhs.uk/news/2016/05May/Pages/can-you-really-catch-obesity.aspx

Myths about Weight

“The idea you can be fat but fit is 'a myth' study argues”

“Superfoods: the evidence”

“Fidgeting probably not a useful alternative to proper exercise”


“Want to lose weight? Eat SIX small meals a day say nutrition experts in new study. (Mirror online, 7/5/15) Truth behind this headline: http://www.nhs.uk/news/2015/05May/Pages/eating-little-and-often-no-better-for-dieters-than-fewer-feasts.aspx
Social Media

Follow on Twitter:
@safefood_eu (e.g. “There’s no need to give up the things you love, simple #foodswaps can make a big difference. Click for more ideas: http://bit.ly/2ikgD7v”).
@HSELive (e.g. “Looking for inspiration to keep your New Years Resolution going? There are fun idea’s for all ages of the family on http://www.getirelandactive.ie/”)
@OliviaC “Good for you” (e.g. “New year...new you? Tune into @dublincityfm @ 11 Muireann Cullen @NHF_Irl talks nutrition & healthy living live here http://dublincityfm.ie”)
https://twitter.com/OliviaC/status/816229594902724608
@FoodSwitchUK (e.g. “Great practical resources for teachers to help teach children about what’s in their food, how to make healthier choices and be more active”)

YouTube and other videos

BMJ: “Short man, or overweight woman? Your size could make you poorer”
BMJ: “Where does the fat go?”
Harvard: “Heart attack survivors who eat lots of fibre live longer”
Women’s Health Matters: “My Health Matters - How does being overweight or obese affect pregnancy risks?”
Howard County General Hospital: “Obesity and Pregnancy”
TED Talks: “The killer American diet that’s sweeping the planet”

Blogs etc

Meal plans and more: Healthy Eating Guidelines, HSE
Nutrition and Health Foundation Ireland (NHF)
Facebook: Obesity Ireland

Temple Street Children's University Hospital “W82Go” programme leaflets: