Being fat 'is as bad as smoking'

Written by Administrator
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<p align="justify">�</p><p align="justify">It has been estimated that, by 2012, there will be 1m obese children in England.� </p><p align="justify">Being overweight or seriously underweight as a teenager curbs life expectancy as much as smoking 10 cigarettes a day, a study suggests. </p> Swedish researchers followed 46,000 men from the age of 18 for 38 years. <p align="justify">Being obese or smoking more than 10 a day doubled the premature death risk, the British Medical Journal reported. </p><p align="justify">Being overweight, seriously underweight or smoking 10 or less raised it by 30% - and interestingly the fat non-smoker ran the same risk as the fat smoker. </p><p align="justify">
Those who were underweight - with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of less than 18.5 - had no increased risk of dying early, regardless of whether they smoked or not. </p><p align="justify">But the team from the Karolinska Institute in Sweden found that those who were seriously underweight - with a BMI of 17 or less - ran the same risk as those who were overweight. </p><p align="justify">They looked at 45,920 men born between 1949 and 1951 who were military conscripts. In this period as few as 3% of Swedish men were exempt from military service. </p><p align="justify">Nearly 3,000 of the participants died - with the incidence of death lowest in the normal weight category. </p><p align="justify">"Compared to normal weight adolescents, being overweight at the age of 18 increased the risk of premature death by just over a third, while being obese more than doubled the risk," the team, led by Dr Martin Neovius, wrote. </p><p align="justify">And this risk increased regardless of smoking status, they added. </p><p align="justify">BODY MASS INDEX
Calculated by dividing weight in kilograms by height in metres squared
Normal: 18.5 - 24.9
Overweight: 25 - 29.9
Obese: Above 30</p><p align="justify">
Dr Ian Campbell, of the charity Weight Concern, said the findings were "very interesting". </p><p align="justify">"When patients who are overweight and smoke ask what they should work on first, we've always said smoking as the wisdom has always been that this poses more health risks - yet this study suggests otherwise." </p><p align="justify">Betty McBride, of the British Heart Foundation, said: "The government need to bring the same level of sustained focus to tackling the obesity crisis it has previously brought to smoking." </p><p align="justify">"The number of young people who are overweight and obese is growing. Without tackling this now we risk the next generation growing up with more health problems than their parents." </p><p align="justify">Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/7908575.stm</p>