

## A Big Dog Special Report:

# Obesity: A Personal look inside

**Family first Health bites report:** “Over the last decade children, in the United States, have been gaining more and more weight. Obesity is rapidly becoming an epidemic in our lives. Whether it’s all the fast food or lack of exercise, children are heavier than ever. This increase in the national girth is giving way to such debilitating and chronic disease as diabetes, joint and muscle ailments, and even heart disease.”

**FROM Mayo Clinic: Report on Obesity in America of October 5, 2000:**

“The growing prevalence of obesity in the United States represents a significant health threat to millions of Americans, federal health officials say. Obesity rose 6 percent nationally between 1998 and 1999, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The increase affected all regions of the country and all demographic groups. Obesity is defined as having a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or higher. A BMI of 30, in most cases, means that an individual is about 30 pounds over their ideal weight. Physical inactivity and being overweight account for more than 300,000 premature deaths annually in the U.S., second only to tobacco-related deaths.”

So with this background of research in hand let us see what could be some of the reasons why this is happening to our way of life. We have set up an interview with a gentleman today, Mr. Bob Davis.

*So Mr. Davis what is it that causes you to be such a large man?*

Well plain and simple, I just love to eat! Ever since I was around 7 or 8 I have learned that food is my soothing friend. It makes my emotional pain go away. If I am happy or sad, bored or whatever, I can eat and make it go away or in essence change how I feel. It seems that this all came about by me seeing my dad bash my moms head into a corner of a room and the subsequent divorce of my Mom and Dad. Whenever my mom would pick us up it would be a very volatile and anxious situation. My siblings and I would be rushed into her car and cursing and chasing behind us would be my dad after my mom. It seemed every time my mom would come over she would stir some sort of controversy up. I can remember my dad consistently telling my siblings and I “if your mother loved you, she would have custody of you, but she doesn’t I do, she doesn’t love you!” He would retort this in anger, as he was irritated at us for the umpteenth time for getting on his last nerve. Now having gone through being a single dad and trying to find help and a babysitter and some semblance of a life with only one child, I don’t know how he ever did it with four of us kids.

I also found that it was socially cool to sit and eat and eat at our family functions. It seemed that in order to maximize time with my dad I could stay longer at the table and eat; Plus it just seemed like that’s what was done in our family, everyone gathered and let the good eats roll. I can remember many a fond memory around the eating experience.

My dad worked a lot, I guess you’d have to the way we ate and went through clothes. But he also made sure my step mom had us in scouts and baseball and music at school. He wanted us to have as normal life as possible so he worked his proverbial tail off. Most of the time we didn’t appreciate it, we were kids, we didn’t really know better. So that’s why he worked all those long hours, he was a great provider. But I just wanted to be near him. I would run away from my babysitter to have a blt sandwich with him at lunch, he was a great cook and still is. Once in a while he would be home in time to have popcorn with us kids while watching TV. He would have us run and get bowls to share his big bowl he’d made; probably knowing we were going to eat half of it.

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Conversely though I can remember many a late night my dad come dragging home and having no dinner and lucky if he had a can of soup.

As far as other treasured memories, I can remember him on scout camp outs, fixing pancakes for Saturday breakfast. I can also remember playing in many band recitals and watching my dad sneak in the back door at the last minute to hear me play. My heart would soar with glee. Afterwards we might slide over to White Castle, a local burger joint. So food became associated with nurturing me.

As I mentioned the heartache of my parents divorce before, a few years after that when I was eleven or twelve, I was sexually molested by an older scout member whom I looked up to and was spending the night with me in my back yard. Every time the pain would begin to surface, food would help to keep me calm, to make the rivers of tears go away.

I guess finally with the advent of fast food restaurants and their booming business since the seventies, it's a matter of convenience. Alas, the microwave society began. Having to get here or get there and be on time. Stopping and getting something quick is just easier.

*Well Bob, that sounds like a pretty traumatic childhood. Do you believe that the same issues you grew up with transcend across the people of our land?*

Of course, with 4 out of 5 marriages ending in divorce and with many children left fatherless it's no wonder why obesity is running so rampant in young people. In my own life, my son weighs much more than I did at his age and is extremely more lethargic and stagnant with the advent of the age of electronic games and computers galore. I mean does any young person play sports or army or hide and seek or capture the flag anymore?

*Man O Man I believe you're right Bob! So as your life has progressed, has your life gotten any easier to cope with?*

Well not really, the long and short of it is that I got railroaded out of the Navy after nine years of service for being obese. I have been divorced twice and am on my third marriage. I have also had my first son die after he was eighteen months old. I became disabled in 1995 because of a near fatal hospital stay that was elevated by my obesity. Since then, I have filed bankruptcy twice and survive on Social Security Disability and have a whole host of physical health problems due to my obesity.

*So don't you think you should do something about your weight man?*

Well gee I wish it were that simple! I have tried just about everything known to man. I have done weight watchers, jenny craig, the grapefruit, the soup, the popcorn diets, liquid diets, phen fen pills, regular diet and exercise. I had some limited success with a carrot juice vegetarian diet and some with the Adkins diet. Currently I am working with a team of doctors to get clearance and move forward to have the gastric bypass surgery.



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*Well Bob, sounds like you at least have a plan of attack. Do you have any closing remarks Bob?*

To the young people of today I would say, take time to enjoy your food instead of how fast you can gobble it down. Try some raw fruits and vegetables once in awhile they won't kill you and you may even grow to like them. Also, take a break from that gameboy or playstation two and take a walk, ride a bike, learn and enjoy a sport. The exercise will do you good. Most of all, find a friend you can confide in and share your inner most feelings, even if it's a diary. You never know what a good church youth program will do for you either.

To those older ones like me don't blame your parents; they did the best they could. Even though you may have developed habits and emotional eating from some of their effect on your life you don't have to choose to let it continue to cause you to behave this way. We all have a choice; no one is standing with a gun to our head making us eat. I beg you to not let food rule you to the point that it controls your life, the life of your children and all those around you and smothers you to the point that you cannot care for yourself, your family, your mate, or to even have a life at all. A life of pain, boredom, pills, needles, and insulin shots, never ending doctors' appointments, regret, and tears of sadness; all because food is the most important thing, more than life itself, in my life. Wake up America!

To the hundreds of thousands of those who have been sexually molested; find a place to let the anger, the pain, the tears, the rage, go. Find a place where you can forgive in some way or form, not for your perpetrator but for you. So that you can find a place of peace where food doesn't have to reign anymore.

Recently I heard a sermon on wellness and healing and doing something about it. He was preaching on John Chapter five. This guy has been sick for thirty some years and after the background is recorded and the stage set, in verse six Jesus asks the man "Do you wish to get well?" the man replied with all the reasons why he could not be healed.

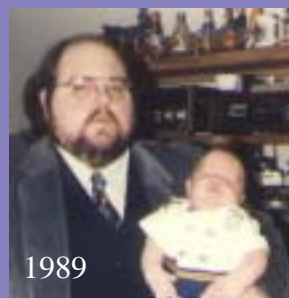
So I would say to all of us do we want to keep making all the excuses in the world and valid ones they are I would agree, but the bottom line is; *"Do we want to get well?"*



**Today I choose yes**, I hope that someday soon you would come to that point too.

*This is Bob near his most heaviest weight of 564 pounds. He is diligently working towards being able to have gastric bypass surgery. He has gone back to college to earn his degree in hopes that post surgery he will be able to embark on a new life, with a new body, new degree, armed to face the business world. Photo taken in 2003.*

*"If you can't run with the Big Dog keep your butt on the porch!"*



1989



1991



1993

1995



1997



81



1983



1985