Diabetes and High Cholesterol Rates Fall in the United States

December 3, 2015

Two new studies show the number of Americans diagnosed with two obesity-related conditions—diabetes and high cholesterol—is on the decline for the first time in decades. Health experts say the reports, both recently announced by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), may suggest that Americans are embracing healthier habits.

In 2009, the CDC reported 1.7 million new cases of type 2 diabetes, a blood sugar disorder that is commonly linked to poor diet and lack of exercise. By 2014, that number had dropped to 1.4 million. During that same time period, the percent of U.S. adults with high cholesterol dropped from 13.4 percent to 12 percent.

CDC researchers attributed these declines to several factors: The widespread use of cholesterol-lowering drugs such as statins, doctors and nurses urging their patients to exercise, the public's rejection of foods with harmful trans fats, as well as folks opting not to light up. (Stats show the number of smokers dipped by nearly 20 percent during the last 10 years).

Still, experts warned that the nation's battle against obesity is far from over. "Of the fat countries, we always been the fattest top three or four in the world," said Gerald Fletcher, MD, a spokesman for the American Heart Association and a doctor at the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida, who commented on the study. Fletcher noted that today, two-thirds of U.S. adults are still overweight.

What's more, the total number of people with type 2 diabetes in the United States is still increasing. Currently, 22 million Americans are living with the metabolic condition nationwide. Also, the number of adults with adequate levels of so-called good cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein (HDL) declined by nearly 3 percent since 2010, baffling the experts.

The good news is type 2 diabetes and high cholesterol are preventable and reversible conditions. Click here to read more.

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