

MOST IMPORTANT TO WEIGHT LOSS? Fitness is important, but remember to pay attention to your diet too. What you eat is 80% percent of your health, so try to eat no more than 15 grams of sugar and 6 servings of carbs a day. Why? Some researchers now say that diet – not exercise – is the key to losing weight. A Loyola University Health System study compared African American women in Chicago with women in rural Nigeria, and found that the Windy City women weighed an average of 184 pounds – 57 pounds more than their Nigerian counterparts. The researchers had predicted that the thinner Nigerian women burned more calories because they were more physically active, but they were wrong! They found that the two groups actually burn the same amount of calories a day, suggesting that their physical activity levels are equal. So why are Nigerian women slimmer? Because Nigerian women eat foods high in fiber and carbs and low in fat and animal protein. In contrast, almost 50% of a Chicago woman's diet is comprised of fat. Deep dish pizza may taste great, but it wreaks havoc on your waistline. So ditch the fatty, processed foods – it's critical to your weight-loss goals. (LifeScript)

DID YOU KNOW that there is a ton of research linking belly fat to serious health risks? Ab flab can put you at risk for type 2 diabetes, heart disease, certain types of cancer, and even premature death. So how do you know if you're at risk? Well, the inches you can pinch, as you say, are made up of subcutaneous fat, the layer of fat that lies just beneath the skin. This kind of fat is what makes you feel insecure in a bikini – it's where cellulite and dimples occur. Still, subcutaneous fat does not pose serious health concerns. The bad kind of fat is called visceral fat. Visceral comes from the word "viscera," which literally means guts, referring to your internal organs. Visceral fat dwells deep inside your abdominal cavity, wrapping itself around your vital organs and resting inside an organ called the omentum. As this fat grows, it begins to push your belly out as your organs get shoved forward. Visceral fat isn't like the harmless fat you find right under your skin; it's like a living monster inside your body, spewing out hormones and toxins that increase cellular inflammation and make it difficult for important organs, such as your kidneys and liver, to do their job. So if you've only got a few inches you can pinch on your belly, congratulations – be sure to continue following a healthy lifestyle. However, if your belly protrudes, you should make some immediate changes to your life. To see where you stand, take out a tape measure and measure your waist right at your belly button. If this number is more than 32.5 for women, or 37 for men, your belly fat is dangerous and must be trimmed immediately! (LifeScript)