

East Central University to host Ada, Walk this Weigh

ADA — Residents of Pontotoc County are taking back control of their lives and their health according to sponsors of a weight loss program at East Central University.

They plan to walk, run, jump or crawl to get their bodies fit again through exercise, good nutrition and by participating in a local health initiative called Ada, Walk This Weigh. In an effort to promote health and fitness for East Central University students, the next scheduled walk will be located at the university's football field and track. Activities will begin at 5 p.m. on Sept. 25. This event is free and open to the public.

Play this Weigh, a fun program promoting exercise for children, will be offered during this event.

The schedule is as follows:

5:15 — Meet at football field to receive pedometers

5:30 — Walk the distance of 1 mile around ECU track. ECU cheerleaders and band to lead walk.

6 — refreshments made possible by McDonald's.

According to the State Department of Health, three of the leading causes of death in Oklahoma are heart disease, stroke and arteriosclerosis, but local health officials say there is good news: something can be done to help prevent many of those deaths. Ada, Walk This Weigh participants are taking the first step toward improving their health.

For more information about Ada, Walk this Weigh or your local Turning Point Coalition, call Ada Regional United Way at (580) 332-2313 or visit <http://www.okturningpoint.org>.

In Oklahoma, approximately forty-three percent of adults report no leisure time physical activity.

Thirteen percent of children and adolescents are now overweight or obese, double the number reported 30 years ago.

More than 15 percent of our youth are considered obese, and about 33 percent of all children under age 18 are at high-risk for Type 2 diabetes.

"The percentage of college students who drank beer frequently or occasionally grew from 45.8 percent at the beginning of freshman year to 58.5 percent by the end of the freshman year" (The Chronicle of Higher Education, Vol. 49, 2002).

The following was found in a student-based survey conducted by The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2002:

-Only 23.9 percent of college students had eaten five or more servings per day of fruits and vegetables (excluding french fries, fried potatoes, or potato chips) during the seven days preceding the survey.

-18 percent drank three or more glasses per day of milk during the survey period.

-40.4 percent had eaten less food, fewer calories or foods low in fat to lose weight or to avoid gaining weight during the thirty days preceding the survey.

-12.6 percent had gone without eating for more than twenty-four hours to lose weight or to avoid weight gain.

-Nearly 53 percent of freshman spent six or more hours per week exercising or playing sports (entering school), but that figure had fallen to 34 percent by the end of the first college year.

Ada, Walk This Weigh is just one small step in a healthy direction. It is designed to improve the health of all the residents of Oklahoma by:

raising public awareness through a fun and innovative approach to reducing individual weight and increasing physical activity levels;

implementing healthy community design and smart growth strategies;

and advocating for nutritional and physical activity policies and standards in schools, worksites, healthcare systems and governmental entities.

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