

# Medical director: keep weight down

By Kathy Stokebrand

The new year might be bringing with it a few extra pounds, but an increase in the weight chart's recommended weight could delight many who plan on celebrating the holidays with eating.

Some doctors favor increasing the optimum weight for Americans because of their high calorie diets and sedentary lifestyles, said Dr. Garland Bare, medical director of the Student Health Center.

"I don't support that movement though," Bare said. The more lean muscle than fat as a percentage of body mass, the healthier the individual, he said.

Those favoring the increase in recommended weights have an attitude that what the majority does is all right, "but I dispute that," Bare said.

Karen Knortz, an assistant athletic trainer for the UNL athletic department, said athletes' weights are determined at UNL by an underwater weighting or displacement of mass system. In this system, the percentage of body mass, that is fat and is not fat is determined. From those measurements ideal weights are calculated for athletes.

American women, Knortz said, have an average of 25.5 percent body fat. Female athletes, depending upon the sport they are involved in, have an average of 16-18 percent body fat. However, she said gymnasts, for example, might be asked to slim down to achieve a 10 percent body fat level.

American men naturally have a lower body fat percent than women, Knortz said. Males have 15.5 percent body fat. Male athletes usually have an average of five to 14 percent body fat, although some marathon runners have been known to get down to a two percent body fat level, she said.

Bare urged individuals to plan their "strategy" ahead of time for the holiday season. If they are planning to eat a large meal, then extra exercise should be included in this plan, he said. If weight is a problem for someone, Bare encouraged them to "go easy on the alcohol and rich-calorie foods."

The greatest increase in membership numbers for Weight Watchers occurs at the beginning of January, said Lincoln Office Manager Merna Jernberg. This might have a lot to do with New Year's resolutions, she said. Other months with large membership increases are the spring months and September, said Jernberg.

## want ads

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