



## **Top 5 Most Dangerous Health Trends for Women**

*How women can make better choices in food, exercise and habit-of-thought.*

Women tend to be the ones who manage a family's nutrition, health, and peace of mind—in addition to managing many other things. It's no wonder women find it difficult to pay attention to their own health. They often don't, until it's too late and their only recourse is the doctor.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services says health care expenditures make up the highest percentage of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of any other country in the world.<sup>1</sup> It's no wonder we are so unhealthy. One study calls obesity an epidemic, and indicates that if the number of overweight adults in the U.S. continues to grow as it has over the past three decades, nearly nine out of 10 adults will be considered overweight or obese by 2030.<sup>2</sup> Only one out of three adults exercises regularly.<sup>3</sup>

These are not statistics Americans can be proud of. What if we could prevent the conditions that jeopardize our health and send us to our physicians? What if women could gain the knowledge and make the time they need to take control of their health?

Rocco Boulay, exercise physiologist, five-time national power lifting champion and owner of **Integrity Health Coaching for Women** in New Hampshire, believes it's possible for women to focus on their health and improve their quality of life without jeopardizing the rest of their schedule.

"In fact, I believe until women learn to take care of themselves first, our chance for future survival is bleak," Rocco says. "Women have always been the cornerstones of every family unit. If we are to survive as a race, it will be through the nurturing quality of women."

### **What's getting in the way of women's health?**

Every woman on the planet has the right to exceptional health, and Rocco has identified five fundamental roadblocks keeping her from getting the good health they deserve. He says, "If women simply become aware of these five problems, they already are on the road to better health. Then they need to find a friend, coach or environment that supports their effort to overcome the challenges."

#### **Women's Health Roadblock #1: Eating to make us happy.**

Culturally, eating sweet foods or drinking alcohol has become a quick and easy way for American women to give themselves a mini-reward to relieve stress. It's not expensive, it doesn't take a lot of time, and it's something completely within a woman's control. We tend to choose foods high in carbohydrates, because they give us an instant rush of energy that feels good. In many cases, food is a way to salve low self-esteem that has its roots early in life.

"You'd be surprised how many women learned to turn to food as a comfort in the face of angry, demeaning or abusive parents or spouses—even years later," Rocco explains. "It's a life-long habit that's hard to break if you don't figure out why you're doing it. Most people are so programmed by their past habits and what the media portrays that they don't even realize it."

Over time neurological pathways in the brain form long lasting connections that the individual actually "thinks" that these behaviors are normal. This is why so many people are addicted to junk foods. Junk foods excite these pathways and transmit feelings of pleasure to the individual while at the same time destroying their health."

### **Women's Health Roadblock #2: Eating foods that wreak havoc with our hormones.**

The average woman has an unnatural amount of hormones in her system. According to Rocco, this is in part because we turn to convenient foods, and those foods often contain harmful substances. Animal products are injected with hormones. Fruits and vegetables are sprayed with herbicides and pesticides, which mimic hormones. Even parabens in many of the toiletries we use mimics hormones.

These extra hormones cause an imbalance of the estrogen-to-progesterone ratio in females. Among other things, it leads to young girls developing earlier than they would naturally. In older females, hormone imbalance can cause many hormonal glands to shut down, which leads to weight gain and further production of more fat cells, which produces more estrogen. It's a vicious cycle of low energy and weight gain.

Another common problem with women is hypothyroidism. Hypothyroidism affects women four times more often than men especially between the ages of 35-60. This condition is caused by the inability of the thyroid gland to produce the necessary amounts of T4 and T3 hormone that regulates the body's metabolism. **(taken from healthscout.com)**

Progesterone deficiency, may cause fatigue, weight gain, depression, irritability, memory and concentration problems, headaches, irregular and painful menstrual cycles, water retention, loss of libido, and cold hands and feet. These same signs are also representative of hypothyroidism and thyroid hormone resistance.

As stated above the imbalances between estrogen and progesterone in older females has a direct affect on thyroid function. Many women treated with natural progesterone cream have seen significant positive changes in thyroid function and faster fat loss while exercising. **(Taken from natural-progesterone-advisory-network.com)**

### **Women's Health Roadblock #3: Choosing the wrong foods to eat.**

It's tempting for women to choose convenient foods. Fast foods and prepared foods save time, and after we become used to high levels of fat and sugar in processed foods, healthier foods don't taste good.

"The great American diet includes too many foods that are high glycemic in nature," Rocco says, "and not enough that are high in protein. Protein is the only way for a body to maintain a healthy metabolism. It's true what they say: 'You are what you eat.'" Rocco believes women simply don't have the knowledge they need to realize what happens to their bodies when they make destructive food choices.

Choosing the right foods is a matter of education. Many people who visit their doctor and get a health warning are typically those who are suffering from conditions related to poor eating. Most doctors tell their patients that they should exercise and eat better, but what exactly does that mean? Where can someone go to get the right information? This is where the problem starts for most; everyone claims they have the solution but nothing other than eating healthy foods in the proper combinations really work over the long term.

#### **Women's Health Roadblock #4: Eating sugar before bed.**

It's bad enough that we eat too many high-glycemic foods. We make things worse when we eat them at day's end, when we finally have time to ourselves and we believe we deserve a treat. The problem, says Rocco, is that a high level of sugar causes a spike in insulin, which blocks the secretion of growth hormone during REM sleep, the deepest stage of sleep. Growth hormone is the body's best fat burner!

Growth hormone also is blocked when women with hormone imbalances don't get enough sleep and don't go into REM sleep. This can cause weight gain no matter how hard you exercise and diet. Women often get depressed about weight gain, then get medication from the doctor, which compromises the brain's neurotransmitter levels and keeps the patient depressed and not sleeping well—another vicious cycle.

Lastly, alcohol is a beverage of choice with many females. Due to the high levels of stress women deal with daily alcohol has become the nightly cocktail for many. This habit also leads to rising insulin levels before sleep and interrupt the sleep cycle causing additional weight gain. Rocco adds, when women are questioned about alcohol consumption prior to beginning an exercise program the response he hears most is, "I can't give up MY wine". It appears that many women sabotage their health with alcohol frequently. If you drink in the evening try to finish consuming alcohol at least 3 hours before sleep.

**(Taken from <http://www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders/features/nix-nightcap-better-sleep>)**

#### **Women's Health Roadblock #5: Lack of physical activity.**

It seems as though women are constantly moving, taking kids to soccer practice, cleaning up messes, sprinting after toddlers, and picking up groceries. However, it's not enough. Our bodies were designed for more rigorous activity, and if we don't get it we can't reach our best state of health.

There are a number of components to beneficial exercise, Rocco says, and all of them have to be balanced to maximize our health. The five components of effective exercise are strength (resistance training), cardio, flexibility, body composition, and the mind-body connection. "Each individual is different, and you need to know where your body stands today to determine what kind of exercise will bring you the greatest benefits," Rocco explains.

### **How can women avoid these five dangerous roads to bad health?**

There are three keys to better women's health, according to Rocco. First, we need to understand and support each individual woman according to her unique needs. Before designing a nutrition and exercise program, he recommends measuring baseline conditions to find out what's really going on in the body: body composition, hormones, cardio endurance, strength, emotional status and more. It's also important to analyze underlying beliefs about exercise and eating. Once you've established a baseline, you can get help to figure out which exercises to do, how to change your food choices, and what other factors to address for a healthier life.

The second good health secret for women, according to Rocco, is addressing health in a well-rounded, specific to the individual way. "If you can touch your toes, you have trunk flexibility, but that's not enough. You may just barely be able to lift your kids because you lack strength," Rocco points out. "Your body's systems all work together, and if you are lacking in one area, it throws everything off. That's why so many women diet and work out, but still don't lose weight."

The most effective way to get fit is to optimize all the components specifically for each person. No two persons' fitness level is the same. Addressing each person's fitness capacity and then designing an exercise prescription tailored to that individual is vital to their success.

Finally, after many years of working with women to improve their health, Rocco says he has found that good health doesn't just happen for women—they need support, from giving them permission to spend time on themselves to identifying mental blocks, motivating them and laying out a strategy for eating and exercising. That is, in fact, why he designed Integrity Health Coaching for Women<sup>4</sup> as an all-encompassing service to women. It's not just a gym where no men are allowed; it is a female focused support center that coaches women to better health.

"When you join Integrity, you get everything a gym provides plus their patented, scientifically proven EZ Coach exercise, weight loss, nutrition, and coaching system—all built into one great place at a price that's already less than the cost of many gyms membership alone," Rocco explains. "It's much more gratifying for us to see women succeed with support." Every member of Integrity is supplied with a new health coaching routine and update by a certified coach every 8 weeks to ensure absolute progress. Members also get a meal plan based on their body's current ability to burn calories, plus recipes and shopping lists to make it easy.

### **Let's create women's health statistics we can be proud of.**

By avoiding these five dangerous health trends, women can improve their individual health. Their success will set a great example for young women in the next generation. Ultimately, we actually could change the statistical trends for women's health in America. Wouldn't it be nice to see statistics about women's health that we all can be proud of?

To learn more about how you can CHOOSE to feel amazing and have amazing health and fitness in your life, contact us to learn more at [www.integrityfit.com](http://www.integrityfit.com).

**Resources:**

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Power of Prevention 2003.*

<sup>2</sup> Wang Y. M. A Beydoun L. Liang B. Cabellero and S.K. Kumanyika *Will All Americans Become Overweight or Obese? Estimating the Cost and Progression of the U.S. Obesity Epidemic*

<sup>3</sup> National Center for Health Statistics. *National Health Institute Survey, March 2008.*

<sup>4</sup> Integrity Fitness Centers, [www.integrityfit.com](http://www.integrityfit.com).