A Fatter World, Yet Fewer Cases of High Blood Pressure

This is the VOA Special English Health Report.

Last week a study of one hundred ninety-nine countries and territories confirmed what many people may have already noticed. People around the ..... are getting fatter. The study found that obesity has almost doubled since nineteen eighty.

Majid Ezzati at Imperial College London led the research team. He says the results show that obesity, high blood pressure and high cholesterol are no longer just found in wealthy ..... These are now worldwide problems.

The study appeared in the Lancet. It ..... that in two thousand eight, almost ten percent of men were obese. That was up from about five percent in nineteen eighty. That same year, almost eight percent of women were obese. By two thousand eight, the ..... of obesity among women was almost fourteen percent.

Obesity is commonly measured by body mass index, or BMI. This is a measure of a person's ..... in relation to height. A person with a BMI of twenty-five to twenty-nine is considered overweight. The World Health Organization defines obesity as a body mass index of thirty or more.

Pacific island nations have an average BMI of around thirty-five -- the ..... in the world.

But the study found that the United States had the single highest average among wealthy ..... Men and women had an average BMI of over twenty-eight. New Zealand was next. Japan had the lowest, at about twenty-two for women and twenty-four for men.

The report had some good news, however, about high blood pressure,. The percentage of people with this major cause of ..... attacks and strokes has fallen since nineteen eighty. Dr. Ezzati credits improved testing and treatment in wealthy countries. He says a decrease in the use of salt and unhealthful fats probably also helped.

In the United States, new guidelines urge Americans to reduce salt, sugar and fatty meats and to eat more..... and whole grains. People are being urged to choose water over sugared drinks and to make fruits and vegetables half of a meal. But whatever they eat, Americans are ..... urged to follow new advice from the government: eat less.

Lynn Goldman, dean of public health at George Washington University, praised the dietary guidelines released last week.

LYNN GOLDMAN: "This is a call to go back to older ways of eating, to eating whole foods, whole grains, fruits and ..... more healthy foods. And hopefully these guidelines will be noticed worldwide and people will take steps to both increase their physical activity and to eat ....."

And that's the VOA Special English Health Report, written by Caty Weaver. I'm Steve Ember.

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