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Sidbury Believes Eating Habits Formed in Youth

Mothers of America, do you make your children eat everything on their plates?

Do you insist they eat three balanced meals whether they are hungry or not?

Is that chubby kid on the soup advertisements your image of a healthy youngster?

Dr. James B. Sidbury Jr. says Americans have been taught to believe that a fat, round baby is a healthy baby and that a healthy child must eat a set amount of food every day.

Sidbury believes this early training leads to a pattern of overeating which is the main factor in childhood obesity.

And despite the traditional belief that "baby fat" melts away at puberty, Sidbury says that 80 per cent of fat children end up as fat adults.

Sidbury, chief of pediatric metabolism and director of clinical research at Duke, began three years ago developing a diet program for treating obese children. Most reducing programs are geared for adults, he said, and pediatricians have never had much success with simply giving mothers a diet for their overweight children to follow.

"We realize that the thing that is important is not the diet itself—there are plenty of good diets—but a structured program that guides the child and the family and teaches them new eating habits so that the lower weight can be maintained once it's achieved," he said.

The patients that Sidbury has been working with are not just chubby. Most are at least 50 per cent overweight, and many are 100 per cent or more.

For instance, two brothers aged 6 and 7 weighing 260 pounds apiece were brought to Sidbury for treatment last summer. The mother had not been

concerned about the boys' weight until she found that they could not lift their feet high enough to climb on the school bus.

Another patient is a 100-pound 3-year-old girl who was being cared for and stuffed with food by her mother, aunt and grandmother. When she first came to the hospital she stuffed food into her mouth with both fists, refusing to slow down enough to eat with a fork.

Sidbury takes about five new patients into the program each month.

"We can usually tell when we take the initial history on a patient whether it's possible to be successful," Sidbury said.

"If the mother and father are obese and the family has an obvious pattern of overeating, then we must change the pattern at the root or the program is not going to work for the child.

"A child needs motivation, support and encouragement, and if the rest of the family is going to keep on stuffing themselves it's not reasonable to expect the child to break the pattern," he said.

"When you see a whole family that's obese, it is not a hereditary trait that can't be helped. It's usually a family tradition of overeating," he said.

Sidbury usually tries to put the parents on the same diet as the child. "There are many people who wouldn't stick to a diet for their own sakes, but they will for their children," he said.

But the major motivation must come from the child.

"One question we always ask the child is whether he really wants to lose weight and whether he is willing to make the sacrifice," he said. "If he equivocates or says 'no,' we tell him to come back when he's ready."

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Energy Measures Studied For Duke Hospital North

An idea that was employed when Duke Hospital was being built in the late 1920s is being considered by planners as they think about a new Duke Hospital for the late 1970s.

The idea is to capture maximum sunlight.

But whereas the builders of the original hospital wanted to get as much sunlight as possible into patient rooms, the planners for Duke Hospital North see an additional benefit—saving energy.

In a book called "The Duke University Medical Center," Dr. W. C. Davison, dean of the School of Medicine from 1927-60, wrote about the building of the medical center, how the stone was selected and how "over the weekends, I carried the plans all over the country asking for suggestions."

Whether it was a suggestion he picked up or the idea from the beginning, Davison didn't make clear, but he did say: "We also bent the Medical Center in the middle so that the wards would run northwest to southwest and thus obtain the maximum amount of light as well as to take advantage of the low ground in the rear of the campus so that part of the Hospital could have seven stories."

Sunlight and cost savings are still in vogue today.

At a meeting last month in St. Louis, cost-saving and energy-saving measures were discussed by representatives of Hellmuth, Obata and Kassabaum, architects for the new hospital; Ayres and Hayakawa, consulting engineers; the Hospital Project Management Office; and Medical Center Engineering and Operations.

Ted Tyren, the project's newly appointed staff engineer, reported that among the considerations was the thought that "by turning the building 30

degrees there could possibly be an overall savings in construction cost."

That concept also figures in the planners' extensive exploration of what Tyren called "architectural and mechanical design aimed at long-term energy savings."

But giving a building maximum exposure to the sun can cause other problems without proper planning. For example, heating costs saved during cool months could be offset by cooling costs during summer months.

These and other factors—including solar radiation, glass exposures, glass areas, double panes for insulation, electric heat, hot water and steam heat and possible combinations of all of these—will figure in continuing discussion between Duke people and architects and engineers, Tyren said.

Employee Voters Should Register

If you are not registered to vote in the May 7 primary election, you have until April 8 to do so.

Also, if you were registered but have not voted for the past four years, it is possible that your name has been removed from the voter rolls.

Further, if you have transferred to another precinct, it will be necessary to re-register.

Registering, re-registering or changing party affiliation requires your going in person to the office of the Durham County Elections Board at 226 E. Main St., on the fifth floor of the new County Building. The office is open from 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

