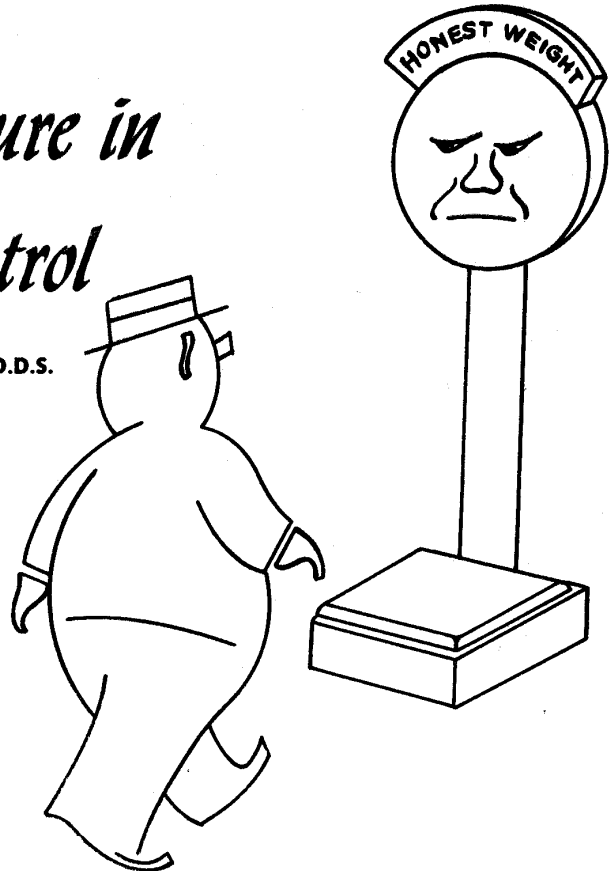


An Adventure in Girth Control

By FRED D. MILLER, D.D.S.

Dr. Miller is a nationally known clinician, essayist and writer on many dental topics. His articles have appeared in nearly all of the dental publications. One article called "Saving Your Face" appeared in *Esquire*. He has held all of the offices within the gift of his state. His father was a dentist. His only son is a dentist. All three were graduated at the University of Pennsylvania. He is a general practitioner who specializes in every branch of dentistry. He is one of our most distinguished dentists. He is this editor's family dentist and great friend.



★
How two overweight gentlemen lost thirty-seven and twenty-three pounds, respectively, in three months' time on a bet.

★
Last November, while on a lecture tour in the midwest, I visited two good friends of mine who were responsible for my coming to their city. They met me at the train, we had breakfast and luncheon together and, after my afternoon lecture, dined together.

The following day I lectured in another town, then returned and spent the next two days as their guest. These two grand fellows are both very successful men, big earners, valuable men in the profession and in their community, good citizens, good golfers, and good company.

Sunday morning, while lying in bed waiting for them to pick me up for a golf game, I got to thinking about these two fine fellows and how they were shortening their lives. I decided to put it up to them

in a way that would make them do something about it. So, after the game, when we sat down to a beautifully prepared dinner, I turned to my friend on the right and asked, "Jack, do you fellows really like each other?" pointing to his pal on my left.

Then I turned to Jim and asked, "Well, Jim, how about you?"

"You know I like Jack," he answered. "We are always together. What is the idea of a silly question like that?"

I replied that I thought they were good friends, but I couldn't understand why two fellows who love each other as I knew they did, were trying to kill each other. They wanted to know what I was driving at.

"Well," I said, "I've been with you two fellows

for four days now. We have had eight meals together, and this is what I have observed: Jim buys a drink: Jack buys a drink. That, of course, destroys your inhibitions, and you both order three times as much food as any human being should try to eat. Look at yourselves. You are both *frightfully* overweight, and you are both literally killing each other. Now here is the point: Jack is 50 and Jim is 47. Life insurance statistics tell us that for every pound you are overweight at 50, you decrease your life expectancy one percent.

"This isn't any wild nightmare of mine. Even Shakespeare was worried about it three hundred and fifty years ago when he wrote:

"Make less thy body hence, and more thy grace,
Leave gormandizing
Know the grave doth gape for thee
Thrice wider than for other men."

So, instead of trying to kill each other, why don't you try to save each other?"

Well, this socked them right between the eyes. No one had ever put the danger of overweight up to them in quite this way. Understand, both these gentlemen are intelligent, highly successful men.

"How much do you think I should lose?" asked Jack.

"How much do you weigh?" I asked.

"Two hundred and thirty-seven pounds."

He is about 6'2" tall, a big fellow. I said, "Well, Jack, you should lose about thirty-seven pounds."

"How much do you think I should lose? I weigh one hundred and ninety-three," said Jim.

He is about 5'7" tall. I said, "Well, Jim, you should lose about twenty-three pounds."

Their next question was how long it would take. "Well," I said, "this is November 20th. By the time we meet in Chicago in February, you should both be pretty well along on your girth control program. I'd say you should both be able to make it safely by March 1st."

"Jack," said Jim, "I'll bet you one hundred dollars, 'do and don't', I'm to lose thirty-seven pounds, you to lose twenty-three by March 1st."

"It's a bet," said Jack. They shook hands, then wanted to know how they were to do it.

"Well," I said, "there are two exercises: first, you must exercise your intelligence; second, you must exercise by pushing yourself away from the table. Scientific weight reduction is largely a matter of being sure that each day you include in your dietary all of the seven basic foods, but cut down on the quantity of food. It isn't necessary to deprive yourself of any particular food but just limit the quantity. Always remember that one of the bad things about liquor is that it destroys your inhibitions. You must exercise will power and won't power. There are certain things you must do and certain things you must not do. It's largely a matter of making up your mind."

After I came home I wrote them, giving them the seven basic foods. I told them to increase largely the amount of green, leafy vegetables in their diet, to eat large servings of two vegetables at each meal, to increase their consumption of fresh fruit and to eat a minimum of meat. I told them to eat only whole wheat toast as a cereal; that they should not eat breakfast foods with cream and sugar for they are never properly digested because they are never properly masticated and insalivated and, therefore, the ptyalin in the saliva does not have time to convert the maltose into dextrose which is the first stage of the digestion of starch.

I, also, told them that they should eat no hurried meals; to eat less food and eat it slowly.

During the following three months, I had numerous letters and cards from them enclosing graphs which showed their progress in weight reduction. To make a long story short, on March 1, they "weighed in." Jack weighed 199½ and Jim weighed 169½. Jack said the only fellow who profited was his tailor, for it cost him four hundred dollars for new clothes.

Now they both know how they have profited; their golf games have improved (that's important, too), no more puffing and panting on the hills; they both feel fine and they are more efficient in the strenuous work of practicing dentistry. They have taken a terrific load off their hearts. They both feel a sense of personal pride in their achievement, and they have made another one hundred dollar bet that they will maintain their present weight six months later. And they will do it. All they need is the continued help of their wives in maintaining the program and they are sure of this help because wives know the advantages of girth control.

It would be hard to estimate the value to each of them in dollars and cents, but it will run into six figures if they add only a few years to their valuable lives. They are both grateful to me, and I am happy because I know, from personal experience, the value of keeping one's weight down to normal. It sounds simple, doesn't it?

America is worried about meat shortages and food rationing, but we do not need to worry. We should know "that half of what we eat keeps us alive and the other half kills us." Food shortages, to many of you "overweights", is a blessing in disguise. Don't worry! Cheer up! Be sensible and you will add a number of *comfortable* years to your life. Of course, if your primary pleasure is eating, if you work hard but fail to give your body as much care as you do your car, if you rush through your meals to hurry back to earn more money, you may wind up being the richest man in the cemetery. And I say to you before it happens—go ahead, sucker. Dig your grave with your teeth!

1122 — 12th Avenue
Altoona, Pa.

Reprinted by
LEE FOUNDATION FOR NUTRITIONAL RESEARCH
Milwaukee 1, Wisconsin
Reprint No. 87
Price .01¢