



**These notes represent a detailed interpretation of the professor's lecture. They are not a transcript of the lecture. TakeNote® is best used as a supplement to your own notes, not as a substitute.**

Lecture Date: Tuesday, January 29, 2008

Announcements:

- There will not be class Tuesday, February 5, 2008. Professor Levitsky has jury duty.
- If you are not enrolled in Blackboard, email Professor Levitsky and he will enroll you.

I. The History of Obesity

- A. 30,000 years ago: Venus of Willendorf (the statue shown at the beginning of each class) was created.
1. She is interesting because she is obese and this statue dates back to the Stone Age.
  2. She also represents fertility. (Because there must be a certain amount of body fat for reproduction to occur)
  3. Hundreds of figures like this date back to this time.
- B. 50 BC: Various sources indicate that obesity was considered an issue in the medical world.
1. Herodotus: "Egyptians vomit and purge themselves twice every month, with a view to preserve their health, which in their opinion is chiefly injured by their ailment." This appears in early literature; these references to a deliberate fast and purging as a means of controlling weight suggest that the Egyptians were mindful of body size and health.
  2. Pythagoras (who created the Pythagorean Theorem): "No man, who values his health, ought to trespass on the bounds of moderation, either in labor, diet, or concubinage." This reference to moderation recognizes that there was a relationship between overeating and obesity.
  3. Hippocrates: "It is very injurious to health to take in more food than the constitution will bear, when, at the same time one uses no exercise to carry off this excess... For as aliment fills, and exercise empties the body, the result of an exact equipoise between them must be to leave the body in the same state they found it, that is, in perfect health."
  4. All of these ideas of health and moderation date back to early history.
  5. Galen: "I reduced a huge fat fellow to a moderate size in a short time, by making him run every morning until he fell into a profuse sweat. I then had him rubbed hard, a put into a warm bath, after which ordered him a small breakfast, and sent him to the warm bath a second time. Some hours after, I permitted him to eat freely of food, which afforded but little nourishment, and lastly set him to some work which he was accustomed to for the remaining part of the day."
  6. Obesity was already recognized as pathology, as something that needed to be addressed.
  7. There was also a sense of nutrient density in food.