

# Eat Clean and Live Long



**Dr. Rajiv Sharma**

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Sharma was asked to comment on what he sees as one of today's biggest health care challenges*

Obesity and its related complications have posed a great burden on the health care system. Currently, estimates for these costs range from \$147 billion to nearly \$210 billion per year.

In addition, obesity is associated with job absenteeism (costing approximately \$4.3 billion annually) and lower productivity while at work (costing employers \$506 per obese worker per year).

Personally, I feel this burden is more than what we have measured so far.

Lack of adequate exercise and selective eating habits have caused Indiana to rank 10th worst in obesity among all states with 32.6% of adults now classified as obese. Obesity is the major reason for chronic illnesses such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, cancer and arthritis. Childhood obesity is also on the rise and this will put a major strain on our health care system in the future.

"The Child is Father of the Man" (was originally penned by William Wordsworth in the poem *My Heart Leaps Up* and often utilized today to illustrate that your traits are established when you are young). An obese child will amount to an obese adult, leading to a vicious cycle of lack of productivity as well as mental and emotional issues due to low self-esteem.

For America to stay a global superpower of ideas, innovation and freedom, we need to nip the bud of obesity at the root cause – poor dietary choices and poor diet etiquette.

If we are not healthy, we will not be able to stay in the fast lane for too long.

**AUTHOR:** Dr. Rajiv Sharma is the author of *Pursuit of Gut Happiness* and founder of Digestive Health Associates in Terre Haute. Learn more at [www.eathealthyindiana.com](http://www.eathealthyindiana.com)

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