

1 Introduction

According to the findings of the Global Burden of Disease Study, 2.1 billion people worldwide are too fat. Since 1980, the magnitude of this problem has grown by 28 % in adults and by as much as 47 % in children (Ng et al. 2014). In Germany, a study on adults' health showed that 53 % of women and 67 % of men are overweight, with 24 % of women and 23 % of men suffering from obesity (Mensink et al. 2013).

Because physical activity and a sensible diet positively impact a person's well-being and health, incentivizing personal initiative and self-responsibility is essential for promoting sensible lifestyles. Obviously, a diet consisting of plenty of fruit and vegetables, but restraint when it comes to eating meat, and a lifestyle that includes physical activity at least 2.5 hours a week, while avoiding obesity and refraining from the use of tobacco will all lower the risk for serious diseases like diabetes, cancer, myocardial infarction and stroke by more than half (Ford et al. 2009, Rasmussen et al. 2013). Another large-scale study on a cohort of 20,900 men and women showed that positive assessment of the lifestyle factors exercise, body weight, sufficient consumption of breakfast cereals, fruits and vegetables, non-smoking and only moderate alcohol intake lowered the risk of heart failure (Djousse et al. 2009). And the key result from investigations on 83,882 women presented by the Nurses' Health Study (► Chapter 3) was a reduction in the prevalence of hypertension by 80 % in women who were not overweight, engaged in 30 minutes of physical activity a week and ate a healthy diet (Forman et al. 2009).

That means that it is becoming increasingly helpful for people to be provided with the most com-

prehensive knowledge on this subject as possible. Namely, if precise knowledge of the facts shapes our thoughts, then the danger that a poorly balanced diet and lack of exercise will shape the body is lower. The more comprehensive their knowledge of the facts is, the easier people can be compelled to modify their lifestyles and the greater becomes the likelihood that their modified lifestyles will be associated with a permanently successful outcome. It is especially important to begin intensively fostering an awareness for a health-promoting lifestyle in children at a young age. This is when they are impressionable and not biased or predisposed. They readily assimilate the principles of good behavior, while no bad habits have been reinforced yet. In addition to the parents, this is also the mission of kindergartens and schools. The prevailing advertising ban imposed by the food industry aimed to protect children under 12 years of age must be complied with unconditionally and with no room for impunity.



Fig. 1.1 Source: dpa/akg