

## **EUROPEAN CONGRESS ON OBESITY - PRESS CONFERENCE**

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### **CZECHS LEAD THE WAY WITH NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON OBESITY**

The Czech government is the first to launch a national task force to tackle obesity after the historic agreement at the World Health Assembly to a global strategy on diet, physical activity and health.

After the Czech Society for the Study of Obesity stressed the need for action to address the high prevalence of obesity – around 25% among adults over 25 years - the Czech Minister of Health approved the creation of a National Board on Obesity.

Board members will include obesity specialists and physicians dealing with metabolic syndrome, food scientists, and representatives of Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Regional Development, of the National Institute of Health, food producers, and health insurance companies.

The board will to develop an integrated Action Plan against Obesity for the Czech Republic which will involve all aspects of government, business and health. The main tasks of the action plan are to halt the increasing prevalence of obesity (BMI  $\geq 30$ ) and to help manage and reduce weight among the obese.

Two main goals will be to improve diets by decreasing the intake of food with high energy density (high content of fat, high content of sugar) and increasing consumption of foods with the low energy density e.g. with high content of dietary fibre as well as promoting more greater physical activity across the whole population.

#### **Defining target groups in population.**

Dr. Marie Kunešová, president of the Czech Society for the Study of Obesity, said the Society was working in collaboration with STEM/MARK and with support of the Czech Ministry of Health to examine a large cross section of the Czech population (more than 3000 subjects) and identified the impact from four types of food intake.

Co-morbidities (diseases linked to obesity) were found to occur most often among those with an unhealthy eating pattern, who consumed fat meat, dumplings, beer and spirits most often.

High blood pressure (hypertension) and higher blood lipids, (cholesterol) were found in a group which ate meat, potatoes, dumplings, snacks, cakes, beer, wine and spirits.

An healthy food intake pattern was characterized by consumption of fish, poultry, skimmed milk, dark bread, rice, pasta, fruit, vegetables and water and is connected with less frequent comorbidities of obesity (except for arthritis and gallbladder disease).

Researchers found that in young population more frequent consumption of fish, poultry, milk, pasta, ice and soft drinks was found.

The goal is to provide targeted prevention strategies for the individual risk groups.

**Dr. Marie Kunešová, M.D., Ph.D.**

She heads the Department of Obesitology, Institute of Endocrinology, Prague, Czech Republic and teaches at the 1st Medical Faculty Charles University. She was co-founder of the Czech Society for the Study of Obesity in 1993, and has been president since 2002. She is a council member of EASO, and a member of the EASO Public Health and Prevention Task Force, as well as a council member of the Czech Society for Nutrition.

She is in editorial board of the Czech journal *Vyziva (Nutrition)*. She has written more than 80 articles in Czech and foreign medical journals. Her obesity research interest focuses on adipose tissue distribution and lipids and fatty acids.

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