**Shorter Lives for Couch Potatoes**

Modern medicine and **progress** in **public** health services have allowed people in the western world to live longer. While an **average** American lived for only 47 years around the 1900s they **extended** their lives to 68 in 1950 and almost 80 today.

**However**, some health experts warn that we are not doing enough to stay healthy. More and more people in **developed countries** have become **couch potatoes**. They eat too much and **exercise** too little. Some experts even **predict** that today’s children may, in fact, live shorter than their parents.

More and more children are getting **diseases** that typically older people get – like heart illnesses and **type 2**[**diabetes**](http://www.english-online.at/health_medicine/diabetes-causes-syptoms-treatment/diabetes.htm). Two thirds of all **adults** are overweight as well.

Medical journals **predict** that **obesity** will actually shorten **life expectancy** by two to three years in the **upcoming** decades. **Especially** children are at risk. [**Obesity** in children](http://www.english-online.at/health_medicine/childhood-obesity/causes-and-risks-of-childhood-obesity.htm) has **tripled** since 1970. Besides this more and more money will have to be invested in **health care** because an increasing number of people need **treatment** for heart problems and diabetes.

On the other side people can live with **obesity** for a long time and become old if they get the right treatment quickly. Most of them take pills for [high **blood pressure**](http://www.english-online.at/health_medicine/high-blood-pressure/high-blood-pressure-silent-killer.htm) or a higher **cholesterol** level. But this can mean a life full of pills and **constant** doctor’s visits.

There are many doctors who see no problem with being **overweight** as long as you [**exercise**](http://www.english-online.at/health_medicine/physical-fitness/physical-fitness-exercising.htm) enough. And they may even be healthier than thinner people.

* **adult** = grown up person
* **average** = normal
* **blood pressure** = the force with which blood travels through your body
* **cholesterol** = a chemical substance found in your blood ; too much of it is unhealthy
* **constant** = regular
* **couch potato** = a person who spends a lot of time sitting and watching television
* **developed country** = industrialized or rich country
* **disease** = illness
* **especially** = above all
* **exercise** = do sports or other physical activities
* **extend** = to make longer
* **health care** = the service that is responsible for looking after the health of all people in a country
* **however** = but
* **life expectancy** = how long someone will live when they are born
* **obesity** = when someone is very fat in an unhealthy way
* **overweight** = to be too heavy
* **predict** = to say that something will happen in the future
* **progress** = step forward; to make something better
* **public** = free, for everybody
* **treatment** = something that is done to make a person healthy again
* **triple** = there times as much
* **type 2 diabetes** = serious illness in which there is too much sugar in your blood
* **upcoming** = future