Obese Less Likely to Eat Three Meals a Day

BY DOUG BRUNK

FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE OBESITY SOCIETY

SAN DIEGO – More than half of American men and women report a pattern of consuming breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily, results from a large survey found.

However, obese adults are less likely than normal-weight adults to report a three-meal daily eating pattern. They also are less likely than their normal-weight counterparts to consume four or more snacks per day.

The findings come from a sample of 1-day dietary data extracted from "What We Eat in America" (National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 2007-2008), which was released this year. Donna G. Rhodes, a nutritionist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service, presented findings from a 24-hour dietary recall made by 2,662 men and 2,758 women, aged at least 20 years, who participated in the survey.

In all, 59% of men and 64% of women reported consuming the standard three-meal pattern of breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and about 90% of both sexes reported at least one snack occasion per day, which consisted of at least one food or beverage item that contained calories.

Obese adults were less likely than normal-weight adults to report a three meal per day eating pattern (58% vs. 65%, respectively). However, a smaller proportion of obese adults reported four or more snack occasions per day, compared with normal-weight adults (15% vs. 22%).

"Snacking may not contribute to weight gain," concluded Ms. Rhodes, who said that she had no relevant financial conflicts to disclose. ■