

BETTER LIVING FOR TODAY

January 2005
Vol. 4—No. 1

Resource Library

The Meier Clinics Radio Program featuring Paul Meier, M.D., can be heard on . . .

KKLA - Los Angeles

4:00 pm Sundays

KWRD - Dallas

3:00 pm Tuesdays

(2nd & 4th week monthly)

9:00 pm Mon-Fri.

WYLL - Chicago

9:00 am Saturdays



1/7/05—Dr. Meier will be speaking on “How Depression & World Politics Influence Each Other” at Awakening’s 10th Anniversary meeting in Sea Island, GA.

Awakenings is a cloister of national government officials who meet for the purpose of exchanging ideas, and examining trends and policies affecting our nation, our communities and our families.

4/1/05—Dr. Meier will address the Wheaton College students and faculty in Wheaton, IL, on the issues of addictions.

Log on to Focus on the Family’s website

www.family.org
and read Dr. Paul Meier’s monthly contributions to

Men/Women—Focus Over Fifty.

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What's Eating You?

by Paul Meier, M.D.

Mark Twain once rightfully said, “It’s not what you eat that gives you indigestion, it’s what’s eating you.” The Meier Clinics, for nearly 30 years now, is widely known for being “insight-oriented”; a psychological term that means digging out a person’s root problem.

For instance, Tom marries five women in a row who are totally controlling and verbally abusive, and believes he just had bad luck with women. He finds out in therapy, however, that he still craves the approval of his controlling, verbally-abusive mother; this is his root problem.

Sally has been 100 pounds overweight all her life and blames it on a low metabolism. She discovers in therapy that she never felt loved by either parent, and actually put the weight on quite soon after being sexually molested by her best friend’s dad when she was eight years old. The extra 100 pounds is a protective wall against being controlled and abused by other males, but it is unconscious. She binge eats when, in reality, she is feeding her “love hunger.” The counseling helps her to figure out that her weight problem isn’t stemming from a low metabolism after all.



Paul Meier, M.D.
Founder and
Medical Director of
Meier Clinics

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Call our national toll-free number **888-7-CLINIC** to be connected to the Meier Clinic nearest you. A caring professional will be happy to speak with you regarding your concerns and the services available. For more information about Meier Clinics, please log on to our website at www.meierclinics.org.

Physical & Emotional Pitfalls of Childhood Obesity

by Todd Clements, M.D.

I co-authored a book called *Love Hunger* in 1990, that was revised and redistributed in 2004, detailing around a dozen root problems that cause binge eating. Many of our clinics have an eating disorder tract or have a counselor on staff that specializes in eating disorders—binge eating, bulimia (purging for weight control), and anorexia (self-starvation).

The National Eating Disorders Association reports that approximately 35 million people in the United States are struggling with one of these disorders. If you or someone you know is fighting this battle, I would encourage you to seek help as we begin a new year. Give us a call to see if there is a Meier Clinics near you, or seek help from another qualified professional.

Don't let this problem keep eating you up!



Dr. Meier is considered to be a pioneer in the integration of psychology and Christianity, and is a founding member of the Physician's Advisory Council at Focus on the Family. Dr. Meier has appeared on shows hosted by Joyce Meyer, Dr. James Dobson, Oprah Winfrey, Tom Snyder, and Norman Vincent Peale. He has also been interviewed on Radio Free Europe, and has taught at universities and seminars throughout the world.

The August 2004 issue of *National Geographic Magazine* features a story on the growing epidemic of obesity in America. Alarming statistics in the article show that the rate of obesity in American children has tripled since 1980. Most parents are aware of the health hazards associated with overweight children; however, one aspect of obesity in children that is often overlooked is the effect that high levels of weight and body fat play on hormone balance. In particular, I want to examine this effect on young girls.

As a psychiatrist who sees adolescents, parents often ask me why girls today are maturing earlier than the previous generation. More girls today are entering puberty at younger ages. I have seen girls six years old who are developing breasts. Could weight be a factor in this hormone acceleration?

During the 1800's the average age to begin menstruation was seventeen. Ten years ago 20% of Caucasian girls by age eight were beginning to show beginning signs of puberty. Today 50% of African-American girls have hit puberty by age eight; another 20% reach puberty by age seven. Hispanic girls also show patterns of early puberty close to that of African-American girls. How might obesity be a major culprit in this growing phenomenon?

American girls generally enter puberty between ages nine and fourteen. Puberty any earlier than this is called premature (or precocious) puberty. Puberty can be divided into three stages: the beginning of breast development signals *thelarche*—the first stage. *Adrenarche*—the second stage, is triggered by the release of androgens (sex steroids) from the

Mission Statement

Meier Clinics is committed to providing excellent mental health care services that address the whole person—physically, emotionally & spiritually.

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*"For I know the plans I have for you, plans to give you hope and a future."
Jeremiah 29:11*

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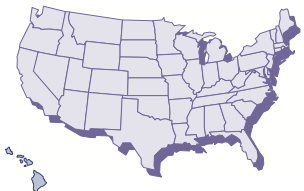
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For more information about Meier Clinics and our services,
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adrenal glands. This is accompanied by the appearance of pubic hair, axillary hair, oily skin, and increased acne.

Menarche—the third stage, is the beginning of menstrual periods. Recent research suggests weight and percentage of body fat sets in motion this chain of events.

The average age of puberty has been dropping every decade steadily since the 1800's. Weight and body fat percentages have been steadily increasing during this period as well. This change is attributed to better nutrition. Today, thin girls begin puberty later than overweight girls. However, the ratio of body fat to weight appears to be the precipitator of these hormonal changes rather than weight alone. Forty-seven kilograms (100 pounds) is the average weight of a female beginning menarche. Body fat ratios of 20-25% are present in these females as well. When body fat percentage drops below a certain level (as witnessed in anorexia nervosa) females stop menstruating no matter what their weight. America has seen an explosion in the weight and body fat of both boys and girls in the past two decades. This generation is the heaviest in the history of the world!



This generation is the heaviest in the history of the world!

Numerous health risks accompany premature puberty. Let's look at these.

Physical health: Early puberty in girls increases the risk of Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS), a disease characterized by loss of menstrual periods, infertility, obesity, and excessive body hair growth. Adolescent and adulthood obesity risks are increased which in turn increases the incidence of diabetes. The risk of emerging breast and uterine cancers are heightened as well due to increased exposure to estrogen.

Psychological health: Girls enter the psychological stage of *latency* between ages 6-10. During this stage, girls avoid boys like the plague and consider them all to be "creepy." This phase is marked by close friendships with other girls, and a

sense of mastery in school and other school related activities. Girls especially need these years to develop a strong sense of self. If the physical changes of puberty come too early, it gives girls confusing signals. They develop the body of a young woman while their mind is still that of a child.

Sociological-cultural health: Premature puberty sets ominous pitfalls for girls. These girls become defined by how they look rather than who they are, which often lowers self-esteem and a sense of self-worth. In addition to changing the body, these hormones also start up the sexual drive. Adolescent sexual urges in the mind of a child can wreak devastating consequences. Girls who look seventeen when they are twelve are often under much pressure from older boys to engage in risky behaviors like smoking cigarettes and experimenting with drugs and alcohol. Girls who sexually develop too early experience more sexual harassment and an earlier vulnerability to accidental pregnancy than their normal-developing counterparts.

Hormones are both marvelous and maddening. Marvelous when they allow our body, mind, and spirit to function at its best, and maddening when they are out of proper balance. Hormone problems are easy to overlook because they are usually not visible like a broken leg. If you have or know a young girl who is overweight, I encourage you to be assertive in helping her get the help she needs in confronting this problem. Start with the family doctor. If her doctor isn't listening, find one who will. Health care professionals today should be equipped in helping you and your daughter find solutions to childhood obesity. I urge you to get answers that make sense. There are too many health consequences if you don't!



Dr. Clements is the Medical Director of the Richardson, Texas, Breakaway program (see page 4). He received his masters of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and his medical degree from the University of Arkansas.

Thank you to everyone who donated so generously last year. We hope you'll continue to partner with us in bringing hope, health, and joy to many who otherwise could not afford to get the care they deserve.

YES, I want to help MCF continue to provide charitable Christian counseling services through a tax-deductible donation.

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Make checks payable to Meier Clinics Foundation. Mail to MCF, 2100 Manchester Road, Suite 1510, Wheaton, IL 60187-4561. You may also make a donation online at www.meierclinics.org or by phone at 800-848-8872. Thank you.



ANNOUNCING

"Breakaway" Adolescent Program

The Meier Clinics of Richardson, Texas, and Wheaton, Illinois, have created a new program designed to address the unique needs of today's teenagers. This program is in response to the requests from former patients and local communities asking,

"Where can we send our teens for Christian care?"

Breakaway provides intense treatment focusing on depression, anxiety, ADHD, eating disorders, grief, loneliness, peer relationships, family issues, and other mental health and relational concerns.

Adolescents will receive individual counseling, engage in group sessions, receive psychological testing, and see a doctor for medication management as needed to address the physical, emotional, and spiritual nature of their needs.

Both programs maintain the same goal—to create a safe environment where teens can effectively work through their "issues"—through two unique approaches. The Texas program will feature an after-school program for ages 13-18 that will run Monday through Thursday. It includes two individual counseling sessions per week in addition to the group sessions and consultation with the psychiatrist. The Wheaton program integrates teens, 15 and older, into the current Adult Day Program but also provides separate teen-only groups and a special group for parents. Participants have individual counseling three times weekly and meet with the psychiatrist twice weekly. This program is run Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

For more information, call us toll-free at 1-888-725-4642.

Resource Library

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For a complete listing of the 70+ books by Dr. Paul Meier, go to our website at www.meierclinics.org and select his biography listed under the Richardson, Texas, clinic.



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