

# Seattle Post-Intelligencer

## The You Docs: What pudgy doctors have to teach you

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If you're seen our pictures, you know we're not talking about ourselves! But some of our colleagues in the Physicians Health Study -- **about 40 percent of the more than 21,000 participating docs -- are a little overweight**. They're sporting BMIs of 25 to 29.9, or waists of 37 to 41 inches (measured at the belly button while sucking in). That's not enough weight to be obese, but it's too much to get them featured on the next Hot Doctors calendar.

And the newest findings from that study suggest that they -- and YOU, of course -- have more to worry about than losing the June slot to McDreamy. **Carrying just a little excess weight gave these guys a 49 percent higher risk of heart failure than their lean counterparts. (Obese people had a 180 percent higher risk)**. Heart failure is common but serious stuff: It means the heart can't keep up with your body's demands on it. Pressure rises in the heart, and blood and fluid backs up into your lungs, so you get tired and short of breath easily.

Staying at your ideal weight is key, but physical activity can help, too; it lowered risk by 18 percent. The researchers defined "active" as breaking a sweat more than three times a month, but we say that's not nearly enough. You need to walk for 30 minutes every day, strength-train for 10 minutes three times a week and do stamina training for 20 minutes three times a week. That fights pudge and heart failure -- and might make you healthier than your doc!

In fact, **if your doc is overweight, you're less likely to follow his recommendations ...** but we'll tackle that another time.