

OBSESITY & OVERWEIGHT

NOLENSVILLE FAMILY MEDICINE
JOHN R. THOMPSON M.D.
615-776-8088



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

Obesity is defined as having an unhealthy amount of body fat. *Overweight* is defined as an excess amount of body weight as compared to an acceptable weight. The common tool to measure obesity and overweight is the body mass index (BMI). It measures body weight in relation to height. Note: A BMI may indicate a person is overweight, but it could be due to lean muscle and not excess body fat (such as with an athlete).

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Low energy levels.
- Breathing/snoring problems, sleep apnea.
- Appearance of large body size.
- Fatigue and joint pain from supporting excess weight.

CAUSES

Obesity and overweight occur when a person consumes more calories than he or she burns. Other risk factors can affect this imbalance in different people.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Genetic factors. Obesity runs in families.
- Emotional feelings. Some people eat when they are depressed, upset, angry, sad, or bored.
- Eating disorder, such as binge eating.
- Metabolic and endocrine disorders.
- Drugs (steroids, some antidepressants, and others).
- Rarely, neurologic disorders.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Proper diet and nutrition. Regular exercise.
- Behavior and lifestyle changes, as needed.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Obesity and overweight can be controlled if motivation is maintained for life.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- High risk for many major physical health problems that can lead to disability and death.
- Emotional problems. These can include depression, and feeling unattractive, rejected and shameful.
- Prejudice or discrimination at work, school, social occasions, and travel.



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- The body mass index (BMI) formula uses height and weight to measure weight status.
 - Adult BMI of 25 to 29.9 = overweight.
 - Adult BMI of 30 or more = obese.
 - BMI formula: (*weight, in pounds, times 703*) *divided by (height in inches squared)*. Website to calculate BMI: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/bmi-adult.htm.

- Waist size (circumference) measures abdominal fat. Over 40 inches (102 cm) in men and over 35 inches (88 cm) in women indicates health and obesity risk factors.
- Treatment steps depend on health status, age, degree of obesity or overweight, and motivation. Steps can include a combination of diet, exercise, behavior modification, and drugs. Gastrointestinal surgery may be recommended with severe obesity.
- You and your health care provider can develop a weight-loss plan based on your individual needs. Keep a food and activity diary to keep track of your progress.
- Books, websites, and weight-loss programs are available to help with weight-loss. Diet plans should provide proper nutrition, information on exercise and behavior changes, and maintaining the weight-loss long-term.
- Behavior changes start with identifying the behaviors that lead a person to overeat and be inactive. Then learn how to change and maintain the new behaviors. Support groups or a weight-loss counselor can help.
- Gastric surgery to reduce weight may be recommended after other weight loss methods fail.
- To learn more: Weight Control Information Network, 1 Win Way, Bethesda, MD 20892-3665; (877) 946-4627; website: www.niddk.nih.gov/health/nutrit/nutrit.htm.

MEDICATION

Drug therapy as an aid to weight loss is usually not helpful. Drugs for obesity may be prescribed on a trial basis to see if they help. Amphetamine compounds are not recommended for treating obesity.

ACTIVITY

Increase physical activity. Start with a daily 10 minute walk. Aim for 20 to 30 minutes of activity 3 to 5 times a week, plus muscle strengthening 2 times a week.

DIET

- Choose an eating plan that will work for you. Diets need to be healthy, help you lose weight, and maintain the new weight. A dietitian can help you choose a plan.
- A realistic weight-loss rate is 1 pound per week. It is normal to have periods when no weight is lost on your plan. Don't stop; weight loss will begin again.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

You or a family member wants help with weight loss.

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page