

Obesity

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Obesity is a term used to describe body weight that is much greater than what healthy is. If you are obese, you also have a much higher amount of body fat than is healthy or desirable. Once it develops it is difficult to 'cure' and usually persists throughout life.

Obesity is distinguished from overweight according to the value of the Body Mass Index (BMI), which can be calculated using the following formula:

File:Obesity 001 .jpg
Obesity 001

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{mass}(\text{kg})}{(\text{height}(\text{m}))^2}$$

After calculating the BMI, this value is compared to standard values of BMI:

	BMI (kg/m²)
Overweight	25-30
Obese	>30
Morbidly Obese	≥40

Anyone who is more than 45 kg (100 pounds) overweight or who has a BMI greater than or equal to 40 kg/m² is considered morbidly obese.

Causes of obesity

Obesity and overweight can be caused by numerous factors:

An inactive life style

Nowadays people tend to spend hours in front of TV and computers, doing work or playing videogames, lacking physical activity in their routines. Even at school, physical education is not given the importance that it should have, and without it, it makes more difficult for children to gain the habits of practising any physical activity. Also, with the excuse that it takes more time, people start to rely on cars and transports instead of walking to the job. People who are inactive are more likely to gain weight because they do not burn up the calories that they take in from food and drinks.

Environment

Our environment does not support healthy lifestyle habits; in fact, it encourages obesity. Some reasons include - Lack of neighborhood sidewalks and safe places for recreation. Not having area parks, trails, sidewalks, and affordable gyms makes it hard for people to be physically active.

-Work schedules.

-Oversized food portions. Eating large portions means too much energy in. Over time, this will cause weight gain if it isn't balanced with physical activity

-Lack of access to healthy food and food advertising.

Family history

Overweight and obesity are conditions that tend to run in families. Children adopt the habits of their parents. A child who has overweight parents who eat high-calorie foods and are inactive will likely become overweight too.

Health conditions

Obesity may be caused by hormone problems such as:

Underactive thyroid - Low production of thyroid hormone, which slows down the metabolism causing weight gain;

Cushing's syndrome -high production of cortisol, by adrenal gland;

Advantages of weight loss

Weight loss is proved to increase three to four months for every kilogram of weight loss. After losing weight a person feels fit, mentally more active and more confident.

Weight loss of 0.5-9 kg associated with: 53% reduction in cancer-deaths; 44% reduction in diabetes-associated mortality ; 20% reduction in total mortality.

Complications

Obesity is a significant health threat. The extra weight puts added stress on all parts of your body, which may cause medical problems, in case of untreated obesity:

- Type 2 diabetes;
- High blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke;
- Obstructive sleep apnea and other sleep disorders;
- Osteoarthritis;
- Certain types of cancer (prostate, colon, rectum);
- Reduced life expectancy;
- High blood cholesterol;
- Depression.

Links

- <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0004552/>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body_mass_index
- http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/obe/obe_causes.html
- <http://hubpages.com/hub/Social-Effects-of-Obesity---What-are-the-Social-Effects-of-Obesity>
- <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/specialist-guides/medical-conditions/a-z-of-medical-conditions/obesity/effects-obesity.shtml>
- <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/7151813.stm>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/trends.html>
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