



Live Well, Work Well

Overweight and obese are both labels for ranges of weight that are greater than what is generally considered healthy for a given height.

OBESITY: EPIDEMIC PROPORTIONS

With over 1 billion overweight adults worldwide and at least 300 million who are clinically obese, obesity has reached epidemic proportions. Obesity is a major contributor to many diseases and health conditions.

Why Is It an Epidemic?

Here are some reasons for the increase in obesity:

- We are eating more energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods with high levels of sugar and saturated fats.
- We are generally less active.
- Economic growth, modernization, urbanization and globalization of food markets contribute to poor eating habits.
- Higher incomes and more urban populations encourage more varied diets with a higher proportion of fats, saturated fats and sugars.
- There is an increased shift toward less physically demanding work and less physical activity due to automated transportation, technology in the home and more passive leisure activities.
- Though genes are a factor in determining a person's susceptibility to weight gain, energy balance is primarily determined by caloric intake and physical activity.

Why Is It so Dangerous?

Being overweight or obese poses a major risk for many chronic and life-threatening diseases, including:

- Type 2 diabetes
- Coronary heart disease
- High blood pressure

- Stroke
- Gallbladder disease
- Endometrial, post-menopausal, breast, colon, gallbladder, prostate and kidney cancer
- Osteoarthritis
- High blood cholesterol
- Sleep apnea and respiratory problems
- Psychological disorders
- Premature death
- Reproductive complications

Am I Obese?

Body mass index (BMI) can determine if someone is overweight or obese. It is calculated by taking a person's weight (lbs.), dividing by their height (in.) squared and then multiplying by 703. A normal weight is a BMI falling between 18.5 and 24.9. A BMI of 25 to 29.9 indicates one is overweight. Obesity is classified as a BMI of 30 or greater. You can figure out your BMI by using the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's calculator at: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/.

What Can I Do?

The most important thing you can do reach or maintain a healthier weight is to eat well and exercise. For instance:

- Daily physical activity is important to overall health and fitness, and it helps control body weight. Effective physical activity requires moderate to intense exercise at least 30 minutes per day, most days of the week.
- Increasing the intensity or the length of your workouts has a variety of health benefits, including weight loss.
- Losing as little as 5 to 15 percent of your total body weight can reduce your risk factors for health problems, especially heart disease. Losing weight can also lower your blood pressure, and decrease blood sugar and cholesterol levels.