

Your Wellness Matters

Obesity



The epidemic of obesity is now recognized as one of the world's most important public health problems. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 42.4% of U.S. adults are obese—and there were no significant differences between sex or by age group.

What is obesity?

Weight that is higher than what is considered as a healthy weight for a given height is described as overweight or obese. Body mass index (BMI) is a measurement calculated from a person's height and weight (multiply weight in pounds by 703, divide by height in inches and divide again by height in inches). A high BMI can be an indicator of high body fat and obesity.

- Underweight range: less than 18.5
- Normal range: 18.5 to <25
- Overweight range: 25 to <30
- Obese range: 30.0 or higher

It's worth noting that BMI can be used as a screening tool, but is not diagnostic of the overall health of an individual.

How prevalent is obesity?

According to 2017-2018 CDC data, the prevalence of obesity was 42.4%, and the prevalence of severe obesity was 9.2% among American adults. The overall prevalence of obesity was similar among men and women. But, when it comes to severe obesity, there is a higher prevalence among women as well as among both sexes within 40-59 age group.

What causes obesity?

Obesity usually results from a combination of causes and contributing risk factors, including:

- Unhealthy diet
- Liquid calories (e.g., alcohol and soft drinks)
- Inactivity or sedentary lifestyle
- Medication use

- Lack of sleep
- Stress

Obesity is a serious concern because it's associated with poorer mental health outcomes and reduced quality of life. It is also one of the leading causes of death in the United States—and worldwide. Health risks associated with obesity include heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis, sleep apnea, asthma and some types of cancer.

How can you address obesity?

There is no single or simple solution, but you can make healthy lifestyle choices to help combat obesity, including:

- Exercise regularly—Aim for 150 to 300 minutes of moderate aerobic activity, like fast walking and swimming, each week.
- Eat healthy—Strive for three regular meals a day with limited snacking, while focusing on low-calorie, nutrient-dense food.
- Monitor your weight regularly—Weighing yourself once a week can help detect small weight gains before they become a bigger issue.
- Be consistent—A long-term commitment to watch what you eat and drink will increase your chances of success.

Where can I learn more?

For more information about obesity, please contact your doctor to evaluate your health risks.