Obesity Is a Disease That Can Be Managed in Many Ways

Find out more about obesity and how it can be treated

**Obesity** is clinically defined as a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or higher. But managing this medical condition is about much more than a number on a scale. BMI Isn’t Everything

BMI can be used as a screening tool, but it does not tell the whole story about the health of an individual. Talk to a healthcare provider if you have questions about how your weight may be affecting your overall health.

Although healthy eating and physical activity are important for weight management or weight loss, some people may need additional tools.

**Diet:** Research shows dietary choices such as eating five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day and avoiding fried foods and sugary drinks help promote a healthy weight.

**Exercise:** Being physically active is not only important to preventing weight gain but also to maintain a healthy weight.

**Sleep:** Lack of sleep has been strongly linked to obesity. Getting enough sleep is necessary for a healthy metabolism, which is how your body changes food into energy.

**Stress management:** Finding ways to manage stress can help with weight loss, as well as lower blood pressure and improve mood.

**Medication:** Medication can be used to help treat obesity by controlling your appetite or blocking your body’s ability to absorb calories.

**Surgery:** Endoscopic and bariatric procedures limit how much you can eat.

**Counseling and emotional support:** Behavior-based interventions like therapy (used with and without medication) have been shown to promote weight loss.

**Changing your environment:** Both your family environment — the way your family thinks about weight, eating and food — and your physical environment, such as access to nutritious foods and walkable neighborhoods, affect your ability to maintain a healthy weight.

**Managing other health conditions:** Obesity is a chronic disease that increases your risk for many other serious health conditions including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, some cancers and poor mental health or mental illness. Managing your weight by taking advantage of the many options available can have a positive effect on other areas of your health.

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**Tools in the Obesity Care Toolbox**

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**Family Environment Matters**

Children of overweight parents have more than an 80% chance of being overweight themselves. Genetics play a significant role in a child’s weight, but there are other factors in the family and social environment that have an effect as well. Some of those factors include family patterns and behaviors, access to healthy food choices, and level of physical activity.