Obesity and Other Health Conditions

Having obesity can put you at risk for developing other serious health conditions. Obesity can affect nearly every part of the body and is linked to many health conditions, including some of the leading causes of preventable premature death — heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and more.

Obesity and cardiovascular disease

Obesity is associated with several factors that may increase your risk for cardiovascular disease, which includes heart disease and stroke.

Some of these risk factors are:
- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure, also known as hypertension
- Type 2 diabetes and other blood sugar problems

A 2018 study found that middle-aged women with obesity are 85% more likely to have a heart attack, stroke, heart failure or cardiovascular death compared to women of a normal weight.

Obesity and chronic pain

Many people with obesity also experience pain.
- Obesity can increase a person’s chance of lower back pain.
- The prevalence of low back pain increases as body mass index (BMI) rises.
- Many studies suggest a link between obesity and osteoarthritis.
- People with obesity may be more likely to get headaches.

Obesity and cancer

Higher amounts of body fat are associated with increased risks of certain cancers, including:
- Endometrial cancer (cancer of the lining of the uterus)
- Women with obesity are about 2 to 4 times as likely as women of a healthy weight to develop endometrial cancer.
- Gallbladder cancer
- People with obesity have a 60% increased risk of gallbladder cancer compared with people of a healthy weight. The risk increase is greater in women than men.
- Breast cancer
- Among postmenopausal women, those with obesity have a 20% to 40% increase in risk of developing breast cancer compared with women of a healthy weight.

For people with cancer, obesity may increase the risk for negative side effects from treatment and the cancer returning and decrease their chance of survival.

The good news is that obesity is a disease that can be managed with the right care. Speak to your healthcare provider about available treatments and support.

Obesity and sleep

Excess weight around your airway can make it hard to breathe, so obesity is a major risk factor for sleep apnea.

Sleep apnea may increase risk for a number of health conditions, including:
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Cognitive decline
- Dementia

About 70% of adults with a type of sleep apnea, called obstructive sleep apnea, also have obesity.

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