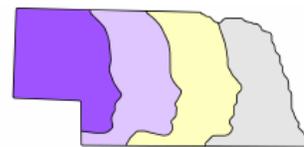


Overweight & Obesity: What You Should Know



During the past 20 years, obesity among adults has risen significantly in the United States. Data indicates that 30 percent of U.S. adults 20 years of age or older- over 60 million people- are obese.

Increasing rates of obesity raise concern because of the potential impact on the health of Americans. Being overweight or obese increases the risk of many diseases and health conditions, including hypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, sleep apnea, respiratory problems and some cancers.

Defining Obesity and Overweight

Overweight and obesity are both labels for ranges of weight that are greater than what is generally considered healthy for a given height. The terms also identify ranges of weight that have been shown to increase the likelihood of certain diseases and other health problems.

For adults, overweight and obesity ranges are determined by using weight and height to calculate a number called the "body mass index" (BMI). BMI is used because, for most people, it corresponds with their amount of body fat. For adults 20 years and older, BMI is interpreted using standard weight status categories that are the same for all ages and for both men and women.

- An adult who has a BMI between 25 and 29.9 is considered overweight.
- An adult who has a BMI of 30 or higher is considered obese.

It is important to remember that although BMI corresponds with the amount of body fat, BMI does not directly measure body fat.

To calculate your BMI, please see the Body Mass Index Supplement

BMI	Weight Status
Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5 – 24.9	Normal
25.0 – 29.9	Overweight
30.0 and Above	Obese

Factors That Contribute to Overweight & Obesity

Researchers have found that several factors can contribute to the likelihood of someone's becoming overweight or obese.

- Behaviors- What people eat and their level of physical activity help determine whether they will gain weight. A number of factors can influence diet and physical activity.
- Genetics- Heredity plays a large role in determining how likely people are to becoming overweight or obese. Genes can influence how your body burns calories for energy and how the body stores fat.

Most weight gain is caused by energy imbalance- consuming more calories than the body uses. For example, if you eat 100 more food calories a day than you burn, you will gain about 1 pound in a month. That is about 10 pounds per year.

Please see reverse

What Are The Benefits of Weight Loss?

Weight loss is an essential part of managing and reducing obesity, as it provides many short and long-term health benefits. Healthcare providers typically recommend that overweight/obese people lose approximately 10 percent of their weight to significantly reduce obesity-related health risks like hypertension, high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes and others.

Always consult with your personal physician or health care provider before beginning a weight loss program.

The Surgeon General's Healthy Weight Advice for Consumers makes the following general recommendations:

- Aim for a healthy weight. People who need to lose weight should do so gradually, at a rate of one-half to two pounds per week.
- Be active. The safest and most effective way to lose weight is to reduce calories and increase physical activity.
- Eat well. Select sensible portion sizes and make healthy food choices.

Additional Resources

Nebraska Office of Women's Health	www.hhss.ne.gov/womenshealth
American Heart Association	www.americanheart.org
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	www.cdc.gov
National Women's Health Information Center	www.4woman.gov
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, My Pyramid	www.mypyramid.gov

For More Information:

Every Woman Matters Program
Nebraska Office of Women's Health
301 Centennial Mall South, P.O. Box 94817
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4817
Phone: 1-800-532-2227 TDD: 1-800-833-7352 Fax: 402-471-0913