

## OBESITY: DIETARY MODIFICATIONS TO ACHIEVE A HEALTHY WEIGHT

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Obesity can put you at risk for developing a number of conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, and some forms of cancer. In addition to regular exercise and behavioral modification, eating a healthy well-balanced diet should be included in all obesity management approaches for a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 25.0 or higher. BMI is an index of weight-for-height commonly used to classify overweight and obesity in adult individuals. A BMI between 18.5 and 24.9 is considered a healthy weight. Overweight is characterized as a BMI equal to or more than 25.0 and 29.9. Obesity is a BMI equal to or more than 30.0. Healthy eating patterns support a healthy body weight, by balancing energy (caloric) intake to energy use, and can help prevent and reduce the risk of chronic disease.

### DIETARY MODIFICATIONS INCLUDE:

- Your doctor should encourage you to eat a healthy well-balanced diet with whole grains, beans, fresh vegetables and whole fruits (instead of simple sugars and carbs), fat-free & low fat (1%) dairy, and protein foods (e.g. fish, lean meats, poultry, and nuts/seeds). If your doctor has no concerns about you doing exercise, you should also perform at least 150 min/week of physical activity (such as brisk walking) and muscle strengthening exercises over at least 2 days/week to achieve the appropriate weight loss and body conditioning.
- Avoid sugary soft drinks and fruit juices. Studies have shown that in overweight and obese middle-aged and older adults on a low calorie diet, drinking water before each main meal aided weight loss.
- A reasonable weight loss goal is 1-2 pounds per week. You can do this by eating 500-1,000 fewer calories each day (this could be as easy as two less sodas per day!). As with all chronic conditions, effective management of obesity requires a highly motivated individual and a committed team of health professionals including your Osteopathic Family Physician, nutritionists/dietitians, and other subspecialties.
- Weight-loss programs, approved by your doctor, can be encouraging, more successful and affordable led by specialty-trained staff. In spite of all the dietary strategies out there, weight management still comes down to the calories you take in versus those you burn off.
- Cutting calories is as simple as skipping high-calorie, low-nutrition items, substituting high-calorie foods for lower calorie options, and reducing portion sizes. At the beginning of a meal, take slightly less than what you think you will eat. Eat from plates, not packages or containers. Check food labels for nutritional facts, serving size, and number of calories per serving. Use a calorie counter as a helpful tool.
- Combining regular activity and healthy eating patterns will best help you achieve and maintain a healthy body weight.

### MEDICAL CARE & TREATMENT OPTIONS:

If you have any questions about obesity, please contact your Osteopathic Family Physician. With a thorough history and physical exam, your doctor will help you determine which dietary changes along with any other treatment options will be best for you to achieve a healthy body weight. In case of any emergency, you should call your doctor or 911 right away.

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**SOURCE(S):** *Obesity and Dietary Modifications. Gov, Up-to-Date, and U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention*

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