



Indian Dietetic Association

O B E S I T Y

What is obesity?

Obesity is now considered a metabolic condition. Excessive fat accumulation in the body poses a health risk. Obesity is diagnosed based on BMI (Body Mass Index), which is calculated as a ratio of weight in Kg and height in meter². BMI cut offs differ based on country specific guidelines established. In India, a BMI of 23 and above is considered as overweight, and a BMI of 25 and above as obesity. Another way of measuring obesity is by measuring waist circumference. If the waist circumference is greater than 80 cm in a woman or greater than 90 cm in a man, they are considered to have abdominal obesity. Women with a body fat percentage of over 40 and men with a body fat percentage over 28 are also considered obese.

Exercise

This is an important component of life style modification. It helps to achieve fitness, which is a crucial factor for good health as it is critical for maintaining muscle mass. Endorphins which are feel-good hormones are secreted post-exercise and they improve the quality of life.



Obesity and Associated Health Risks

- Diabetes, leading to complications like eye problems, kidney problems
- Heart disease
- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- PCOS (Poly Cystic Ovarian Syndrome) and infertility in women
- Many more

Fad Diets

Individuals battling obesity often look out for "quick fixes" most of which involve quick internet searches for solutions. These solutions often come in forms of fad diets, which are usually poorly sourced and rarely evidence based. The most common factor among fad diets is the severe restriction of one or more food groups, and amplification of a single "good" food group. These diets are difficult to follow long-term and may be implicated in future health challenges.

DISCLAIMER

This document is for information purpose only. It acts as a basic guideline for Prevention of Obesity. For specific and individual meal plans, please consult a qualified dietitian/nutritionist.

Causes for Weight Gain

An important factor to keep in mind is the nature of the weight gain which maybe medical or life-style based. Medical factors known to contribute to obesity include genetic factors, hormonal disturbances, side-effects or due to medications such as oral steroids, or psychological factors which can cause binge eating, or stress eating. Life-style causes of obesity include imprudent diet, lack of physical activity, migration (change in society, country, socio-economic strata), inadequate sleep, long working hours, and so on.

Prevention of obesity

- Prevention is better and easier than treating obesity.
- Some important prevention mantras for obesity are to watch what you eat, exercise regularly and sleep well.
- It is important to track your weight and waist circumference through the process.
- Eat at regular intervals and smaller portion sizes.
- Consume plenty of vegetables and 1-2 fruits per day.
- Include protein in every meal. Protein foods are dals, pulses, milk and milk products and non-veg foods like fish, chicken, egg.
- Go slow on visible fats like cooking oils, ghee, butter, cream. Use as little as possible for your regular cooking. Avoid fried foods, high fat gravies and oily items.
- Consume fats from natural foods like nuts (almonds, pistachios, walnuts, cashew)
- Avoid highly processed foods like fruit juices, bakery products, ready to eat snacks, sweets, mithais, etc
- Avoid refined foods such as refined wheat flour (maida), white rice, poha (rice flakes that are made from white rice), semolina, etc. Other refined foods which should be monitored are Ready-To-Eat products made from substances mentioned above like biscuits, cookies, cakes, etc.