

What Is OBESITY?



Today, more than 130 million American adults are living with obesity. As our scientific understanding of the disease of obesity grows, it is more important than ever for people affected to create a partnership with a trained and compassionate healthcare provider who can help you manage your weight and health.



UNDERSTANDING THE SCIENCE OF OBESITY

Obesity is a complex, chronic disease associated with having an excess amount of body fat that presents a risk to health and requires life-long care. Obesity affects nearly every system in the body, and excess weight is associated with the development of additional chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and certain types of cancer.

The body mass index (BMI) is used to screen for obesity, but since it is not a measure of body fat, it should not replace a diagnosis from a healthcare professional. The risks associated with a given BMI may change based on race, ethnicity, age and other factors.

WHAT CAUSES OBESITY?

Obesity is a complicated disease that may have more than one cause, making it difficult to control through dieting and physical activity alone. Causes of obesity may include psychological, genetic and environmental factors.

Psychological Influences

- ▶ Fact: Weight management can be challenging if you are experiencing high stress, lack of sleep or depression.
- ▶ Tip: Taking steps to prioritize your mental and emotional health will help you be more successful with your weight management goals.

Physiological Influences

- ▶ Fact: Your genes and physiology can determine if you are more likely to have obesity.
- ▶ Tip: This is just one reason why the advice to “eat less and move more” is outdated and inappropriate as a solution to obesity. A qualified healthcare professional can help you create a comprehensive treatment plan based on your personal goal and needs.

Environmental Influences

- ▶ Fact: Certain medications, exposure to chemicals and air pollution, highly-processed foods, and a lack of safe and accessible places for physical activities all play a role in obesity.
- ▶ Tip: Consider getting involved in advocacy with an OCW Champion organization! OCW Champions work to improve nationwide nutritional standards, create school and work environments that allow and encourage regular movement, and increase access to affordable healthy foods and obesity treatments.

CREATING A BETTER WORLD FOR PEOPLE WITH OBESITY



Teamwork: Managing your weight with the help of a qualified and compassionate medical professional can greatly improve overall health and lessen the impact of the diseases and conditions that can accompany obesity.



Stop Weight Bias: Individuals with obesity should be treated with dignity and respect, and should not face any type of bias or discrimination based on their weight or size. Bias and stigmatization directed at people with obesity contribute to poor health, delays in seeking care, decreased quality of life and emotional pain.



Expand Access to Care: Having access to comprehensive obesity care is essential for the longterm treatment of obesity. A person with obesity should have access to affordable, evidencebased care that is not limited by a person's size, weight or economic status.

OBESITY CARE IS A LIFE-LONG JOURNEY

Obesity care is life-long – not just while you are actively trying to lose weight. Treatment must be science-based, focused on health and include a range of treatment options. Finding the most effective treatment plan for you may take time and several attempts. But don't let that discourage you! There are qualified healthcare providers out there who are ready, willing and able to help you along your journey toward improved health.

Obesity Is:

- ▶ A chronic disease requiring life-long care.
- ▶ A worldwide health concern.
- ▶ A condition caused by many factors.
- ▶ Treatable and manageable with the help of a healthcare professional.
- ▶ Not your fault!



It's time to take obesity seriously as a chronic disease. Make an appointment with a qualified, compassionate obesity care provider:

ObesityCareWeek.org/find-a-provider