

THE 5 PRINCIPLES OF OBESITY



PRINCIPLE 1

It is undeniable that obesity is a chronic disease.



- ◆ Obesity is a chronic, progressive and relapsing disease, characterized by the presence of abnormal or excess adiposity that impairs health and social well-being.
- ◆ Obesity increases the risk for a range of health conditions such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, types of cancer, mental health conditions, sleep apnea, degenerative joint disease, fertility or fatty liver disease.
- ◆ BMI is useful as a screening tool for risk assessment but should not be used as the sole criteria for obesity. Obesity is a diagnosis that should be made by a qualified HCP based on a comprehensive medical assessment.

PRINCIPLE 2

Obesity is driven by powerful underlying biology, not choice.



- ◆ Obesity is a chronic condition resulting from a combination of genetic, environmental, behavioral, social and other factors. Obesity therefore should not be considered a personal failure or as arising from a lack of willpower.
- ◆ Obesity is a complex, heterogeneous disease requiring comprehensive evaluation and a personalized treatment plan.
- ◆ Body weight is not a sole indicator of obesity. When someone loses weight, the presence of obesity still exists.
- ◆ With weight-loss the body recruits a range of biological responses in appetite and energy expenditure that promote weight regain.

PRINCIPLE 3

The many health effects of excess weight can start early.



- ◆ Adverse health effects of excess body fat can start early in life.
- ◆ Preventing excess weight gain likely has health benefits.
- ◆ Healthy lifestyle habits that are advocated for weight-loss are also beneficial to prevent weight gain.
- ◆ Movement and healthy behaviors are beneficial for all individuals
- ◆ It is difficult to prevent obesity because biological, environmental, social and behavioral factors influence what and how much we eat.

PRINCIPLE 4

Obesity is treatable.



- ◆ There are a range of treatments available that have strong scientific support.
- ◆ The focus of treatment is to benefit health, not just reduce weight.
- ◆ Obesity treatment is lifelong and chronic.
- ◆ There are health benefits to 3–5% weight-loss, and more weight-loss generally has greater benefits.
- ◆ Responses to obesity treatments are highly variable from person to person.
- ◆ There is no one nutritional strategy that is the best for health or weight.
- ◆ Consuming healthful, nutritious foods is beneficial to health.
- ◆ There are a number of anti-obesity medications (AOMs) that are government approved and are appropriate for use in people with obesity.
- ◆ Metabolic surgery is currently the most effective treatment leading to 25–30% weight-loss, remission of diabetes, evidence of reduced mortality.

PRINCIPLE 5

Weight bias, stigma and discrimination are harmful.



- ◆ People living with obesity face substantial bias and stigma in employment, social situations and medical care.
- ◆ People living with obesity may internalize this bias and stigma leading to adverse effects on self-esteem and access to health care.
- ◆ People living with obesity deserve respect, support and appropriate treatment.
- ◆ Limited access to obesity treatment denies people living with obesity the chance for improved health.
- ◆ Not all people living in larger bodies have obesity.
- ◆ The choice to treat, or not to treat obesity is an individual preference.



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