

Prevention Newsletter

...for the health and well-being of you and your family.

Obesity has reached epidemic proportions globally, with more than 1 billion adults overweight, and at least 300 million of them clinically obese. It is a major contributor to chronic disease and disability.

Why is obesity considered an epidemic? There are many reasons, including the fact that Americans are eating more energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods with high levels of sugar and saturated fats. Society's fast-paced mindset encourages eating food on the go, and the family dinner table is all but obsolete.

Don't become part of the epidemic. Learn how to manage your weight effectively and live the healthiest lifestyle possible!

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The Obesity Epidemic

Being overweight or obese poses a major risk for serious diet-related chronic and life-threatening diseases, including Type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, high blood pressure and high cholesterol, stroke, gallbladder disease, cancer, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea and respiratory problems, and reproductive complications.

What Counts as Obese?

Weight is commonly assessed by using Body Mass Index, or BMI, defined as the weight in kilograms divided by the square of the height in meters (kg/m²). A BMI over 25 kg/m² is defined as overweight, and a BMI of 30 or more is considered obese. Go to www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi to figure out yours.

Living a Healthier Lifestyle

It's easier than you think to start implementing healthy choices into your life. Little changes can go a long way:

- Substitute water for one sugary drink every day.
- Add 1 to 2 more fruits or vegetables to your meals each day.
- Plan a healthy snack for every day of the week.
- Switch to a low-fat version of your favorite food.
- Eat breakfast! It keeps you from overeating throughout the rest of the day.
- Watch your portion sizes! A serving of meat should be no more than the size of a deck of cards, and one serving of pasta or rice is only half a cup.
- Stop eating when you feel full.
- Be conscious of what you are consuming. Read the labels on food you purchase and know the serving size.
- Stay away from trans fat, a formerly healthy fat which has been chemically processed into an unhealthy fat. Even something labeled "low-fat" may still contain trans fat.

*Read food
labels for
ingredients
and pay
attention to
serving
size!*



Try New Things!

To lose weight, you must eat fewer calories than your body uses. This doesn't necessarily mean you have to eat less food. You can create lower-calorie versions of your favorite dishes by substituting fruits and vegetables in place of higher-calorie ingredients. The water and fiber in fruits and vegetables will add volume to your dishes, so you can eat the same amount of food with fewer calories – yet feel just as full. Here are some examples:

- Cut back on the amount of cereal in your breakfast bowl to make room for cut-up bananas, strawberries, or peaches.
- Substitute spinach, onions, or mushrooms for one of the eggs or half the cheese you would have in an omelet.
- Exchange 2 ounces of cheese or 2 ounces of meat in your sandwich for extra lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, or onions.
- Add one cup of chopped vegetables and remove 1 cup of pasta or rice from your entrée.
- Try hummus and whole-wheat pitas or baked tortilla chips with salsa instead of potato chips and dip as a snack.
- Store cleaned, cut up vegetables in the fridge at eye level and keep a low-fat or fat-free dip on hand.

Tips for Eating Out

Yes, you can still eat at your favorite restaurant, provided you make some different choices:

- Ask for sauces, gravy and dressings on the side – or avoid them altogether. Try a squeeze of lemon instead of dressing or ketchup instead of barbecue sauce.
- Order foods that are not breaded or fried.
- Drink water, low-fat or nonfat milk, or diet soda.
- Ask for substitutions – a vegetable instead of fries, or for the high-fat food to be left off your plate.
- Order fruit for an appetizer or as a dessert.
- Choose broth-based soups rather than cream-based.
- If offered, choose the “lunch” or “kids” portion over the “dinner” portion.
- Avoid buffets – not only are they normally stocked with unhealthy choices, it can be hard to stop yourself from overeating.
- Immediately ask that half your meal be wrapped to go – most restaurants serve portions double or even triple the size of what you should be consuming.

Dread Exercising?

Don't! There are many ways you can incorporate fitness into your daily routine:

- Park your car in an area that forces you to walk a significant distance to and from your destination.
- Take dance lessons!
- Instead of rewarding your kids with food, involve the family in activity such as a game of Frisbee or rollerblading.
- Ride your bike to do errands on pleasant days.
- Walk your dog 1 block further than usual every week.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator – this includes at work!

Even a weight loss of 5% to 15% of your total body weight dramatically decreases your risk of weight-related diseases, so start your healthy life today!