



VA/DoD Evidence-based Clinical Practice Guideline for Screening and Management of Overweight and Obesity

Patient Summary

Overweight and Obesity

Being overweight or obese raises your chances of developing serious health care problems, including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and certain forms of cancer. Of all causes of death that could be prevented in the United States, obesity is the leading cause.^[1]

Overweight and Obesity Increases the Chance of Developing These Common Conditions and Diseases

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Diabetes and pre-diabetes
- Certain types of cancer
- High cholesterol or dyslipidemia (excess fat in the bloodstream)
- Obstructive sleep apnea (airway blockage that affects breathing while asleep)
- Osteoarthritis (wear and tear of joints, especially hips and knees)
- Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (build-up of fat in the liver that can lead to cirrhosis, liver failure, and liver cancer)

Many factors can contribute to overweight and obesity, including your family history and genetics, metabolism (the way your body converts food and oxygen into energy), environment, and behavior and habits.

Did You Know?

- 35% of all adults aged 20 or older in the U.S. are obese^[2]
- Obesity is especially common among non-Hispanic blacks (48%) and Hispanics (43%)^[3]
- The U.S. has the highest rate of obesity among all developed nations in the world^[4]

Overweight and Obesity in the Military and Veterans

Army Obesity Study (2013)^[5]

- 49% of active duty Soldiers with a BMI recorded in their outpatient electronic medical record were overweight and 19% were obese
- 63% of adult non-active duty beneficiaries were overweight
- 86% of retirees were overweight or obese

Veterans Health Administration data (2014)^[6]

- 78 % of Veterans were overweight or obese and 41% were obese



What is Overweight? What is Obesity?

Overweight is defined as having excess body weight whereas obesity is defined as having excess body fat. Overweight and obesity are typically identified through routine health screening at a clinic or doctor's office by measuring height and weight, which are used to calculate body mass index (BMI). In some cases, waist circumference (size) is also measured, as it may indicate greater disease risk for patients who are overweight or obese. The table below defines overweight and obesity by BMI, and identifies additional disease risk based on waist circumference.

Overweight and Obesity Classification by BMI and Associated Disease Risk			
Classification	BMI (kg/m ²)	Disease Risk with Normal Waist Circumference*	Disease Risk with Excessive Waist Circumference*
Underweight	< 18.5	–	–
Normal	18.5 – 24.9	–	–
Overweight	25.0 – 29.9	Increased	Moderate
Obese I	30.0 – 34.9	Moderate	Severe
Obese II	35.0 – 39.9	Severe	Very Severe
Obese III	≥ 40.0	Very Severe	Very Severe

* Disease risk for obesity-associated conditions

This classification is based on the associations between BMI, chronic disease, and death rates. The relation between BMI and disease risk varies among individuals and among different populations. For example, individuals who are short in stature or who have a relatively high muscle mass may fall into the overweight category according to BMI but may not have extra fat and may not be at increased risk of disease. Use the chart at the end of this guide to determine your BMI category and whether you have a normal weight or are overweight or obese.



Controlling Your Weight

The foundation of treatment for overweight and obesity is comprehensive lifestyle intervention (CLI), which combines dietary, physical activity, and other behavioral strategies for losing and maintaining weight. CLI includes individual or group counseling as well as information about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and the importance of maintaining or achieving a healthy weight.

Effective weight loss is achieved by creating an energy deficit: making sure your body takes in fewer calories than you expend or “burn” through increased physical activity. While different types of healthy diets can be used to reduce your intake of calories, the healthy diet that you select is less important than whether you actually follow the diet. Similarly, no single physical activity program is best for everyone, as each person’s characteristics and goals may differ. Short bursts of physical activity, even 10 minutes, can be just as effective as longer periods of physical activity, as long as the total number of calories burned is increased.

For some patients, CLI is not enough, and you and your doctor may consider using one of the three medications that have been approved for weight loss by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for treating obesity: orlistat, lorcaserin, and phentermine/topiramate extended release. Side effects are common with these medications, and patients who do take them must be monitored carefully by their treatment teams.

Weight loss surgery may be considered for obese patients who do not lose enough weight through CLI with or without medications. If you are being considered for surgery, your doctor and the surgeon may discuss several different types of weight loss surgery. These are known as: gastric banding, adjustable gastric banding, lateral sleeve gastrectomy, biliopancreatic diversion, biliopancreatic diversion with duodenal switch, and Roux-en-Y gastric bypass. As with any surgical procedure, weight loss surgery comes with certain health risks, and it requires making additional lifestyle changes as well and follow-up visits with your health care team.

Obesity is a chronic health condition. However, effective treatments and support are available from the Department of Defense and the Veterans Health Administration. Participating in weight management treatments will improve your health and quality of life, though it requires a lifelong commitment, lifestyle changes and long-term follow-up with your health care team.



What Is Your BMI?

Upper Weight Limits for Category of Overweight/Obesity by Height (in.) and Weight (lbs.)					
BMI (kg/m ²)	25	30	35	40	45
Height (in.)	Normal Wt.	Overweight	Obese Stage 1	Obese Stage 2	Obese Stage 3
58	119	143	167	191	215
59	124	148	173	198	222
60	128	153	179	204	230
61	132	158	185	211	238
62	136	164	191	218	246
63	141	169	197	225	254
64	145	174	204	232	262
65	150	180	210	240	270
66	155	186	216	247	278
67	159	191	223	255	287
68	164	197	230	262	295
69	169	203	236	270	304
70	174	209	243	278	313
71	179	215	250	286	322
72	184	221	258	294	331
73	189	227	265	302	340
74	194	233	272	311	350
75	200	240	279	319	359
76	205	246	287	328	369

Adapted from *Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults: The Evidence Report*^[7]



References:

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