

TYPE 2 DIABETES

and the link between overweight and obesity



What is overweight and obesity?

Overweight and obese are terms used to describe the body weight of people who are carrying excess body fat. To determine whether someone is overweight or obese, their body mass index (BMI) is calculated using their height and weight.

Becoming overweight or obese happens gradually as a result of either;

- consuming more energy (kilojoules from food and drinks) than your body needs;
- consuming more energy (kilojoules from food and drinks) than your body uses by being active;
- a combination of both.

Overweight and obesity is harmful to health as it increases a person's risk of developing chronic diseases including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers. It also increases their risk of developing other health issues, including high blood pressure, gall bladder disease, fertility problems, lower back pain and sleep apnoea.

The more excess weight a person is carrying, the higher their risk of health issues.

Want to find out if you are in the healthy weight range? Learn more at www.livelifighter.com.au/bmi.

What is type 2 diabetes?

Type 2 diabetes is a serious condition that results when the body can't adequately store glucose (sugar) in cells. Glucose is needed by cells for energy and to complete their daily functions.

Type 2 diabetes is caused when the hormone insulin needed to store glucose (sugar) in cells doesn't work as it should or isn't produced in large enough quantities. This causes excess glucose to build up in the bloodstream, which is harmful to health. Over time, high blood sugar levels can damage the body's organs.

Despite typically occurring in older adults, the rate of type 2 diabetes is continuing to increase among young adults and children.

What causes type 2 diabetes?

Although there is no direct causal link for type 2 diabetes, the following lifestyle conditions increase a person's risk:

- ▲ Overweight and obesity
- ▲ Poor diet
- ▲ Lack of physical activity
- ▲ High blood pressure
- ▲ Smoking
- ▲ Body shape ('apple' shapes are at increased risk)

In addition to lifestyle factors, genetics and age are also contributing risk factors.

Please note that type 1 diabetes is a condition that means the pancreas cannot produce any insulin. It has a different cause and treatment than type 2 diabetes and should not be confused with type 2 diabetes. Type 1 diabetes is not caused by lifestyle factors such as overweight and obesity.

For further information regarding causes and management of diabetes, see Diabetes WA or Diabetes Australia websites.



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How is type 2 diabetes related to overweight and obesity?

There is an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes for people carrying excess weight, particularly if it's stored around the waist and vital organs.

Excess weight acts as a barrier to insulin, reducing its effectiveness in controlling blood sugar levels.

Being overweight or obese also puts strain on the pancreas, which is the organ responsible for releasing insulin into the blood. It causes the pancreas to release more insulin to control sugar levels. Over time, this can cause the pancreas to 'wear out', making it harder to produce enough insulin to control blood sugar levels.

It's these increased blood sugar levels, which over time result in type 2 diabetes.

What can I do to reduce my risk of overweight/obesity?

Our weight generally comes down to two factors: how much we eat and drink (energy in) and how active we are (energy out). It is all about achieving a balance. If you are aiming for weight loss, increase energy out (by being physically active) and reduce energy in (by eating healthy food).

To achieve and maintain a healthy weight, the best things you can do are to:

- ▲ Eat a variety of nutritious foods from the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating
- ▲ Limit intake of foods high in saturated fat, added sugar and salt
- ▲ Be physically active every day

For good health and to help you reach your healthy weight goals, we recommend following our top tips to LiveLighter®:

- ▲ Watch your portion size
- ▲ Avoid sugary drinks
- ▲ Sit less
- ▲ Cut back on salt
- ▲ Cut back on alcohol
- ▲ Watch the fats you eat
- ▲ Go for 2 fruit and 5 veg
- ▲ Cut back on added sugar
- ▲ Choose healthy snacks
- ▲ Be active every day

Working to achieve a healthy weight will help to lower your risk of developing chronic disease. However, it is important to note that no matter what your size or weight is, being physically active and eating well will improve your health.

If you think you are overweight or obese, we encourage you to see your GP or an Accredited Practising Dietitian for personalised advice.

For more information on how to achieve and maintain a healthy weight for good health, visit the following websites:

- LiveLighter®: www.livelighter.com.au
- Eat for Health: www.eatforhealth.gov.au
- Heart Foundation: www.heartfoundation.org.au
- Cancer Council: www.cancer.org.au
- Diabetes Australia: www.diabetesaustralia.com.au

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