



## Obesity and Ways to Prevent It

Obesity is an epidemic in the United States. Obesity is defined as a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 or greater. During the last 20 years, the United States has seen a substantial increase in obesity. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from 2003-2008, over two-thirds of adults in the United States are overweight and over one-third are obese. Considering obese individuals have increased death rates compared to healthy weight individuals, these statistics are very concerning.

### BMI - Where Do You Fall?

The formula for BMI:

$$\frac{\text{your weight (in lbs)} \times 703}{\text{height (in inches)}^2}$$

CLASSIFICATION	BMI
<i>Under weight</i>	<18.5
<i>Normal weight</i>	18.5-24.9
<i>Overweight</i>	25-29.9
<i>Obesity Class I</i>	30-34.9
<i>Obesity Class II</i>	35-39.9
<i>Extreme Obesity Class III</i>	≥40

### Find Your Tape Measure

Did you know that men with a waist circumference > 40 inches, and women with a waist circumference > 35 inches are more at risk for diabetes, high cholesterol, high

blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease due to the excess abdominal fat? If your waist circumference is greater than these values, then you are considered one BMI class above where you would normally be. It is not necessary to measure waist circumference in those individuals with BMI ≥35, because this is not a good predictor of risk.

### Obesity can cause:

- *High blood pressure*
- *Type 2 Diabetes*
- *High LDL ("Bad") Cholesterol*
- *Depression*
- *Breathing problems such as sleep apnea*
- *Coronary heart disease*
- *Stroke*
- *Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease*
- *Gallbladder disease*
- *Osteoarthritis*
- *Certain types of cancer*
- *Pregnancy complications*

### But the good news is....

Weight loss can help reduce your risks for many other diseases. The most fail-safe method for weight loss is exercise and diet. If these fail, consider talking to your doctor about other options. Once you have achieved a healthy weight, it is important to maintain it by adopting a healthy lifestyle.

### Helpful Websites

US Department of Health and Human Services,  
Physical Activity Guidelines

[www.health.gov/PAGuidelines/](http://www.health.gov/PAGuidelines/)

US Department of Health and Human Services  
Dietary Guidelines

[www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/](http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/)

US National Library of Medicine and National Institutes of Health  
Obesity Overview

[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/obesity.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/obesity.html)

## Slow & Steady Loses the Weight

Current recommendation for weight loss is to lose 10% of body weight in the first 6 months or a steady loss of one pound per week by using a combination of diet, exercise, and behavior therapy.

### Diet

Reduce your total daily calories by 500 - 1,000, but avoid very low calorie diets (<800 cal/day). Adopt a low fat, low salt, fiber enriched diet.

- 1,000 - 1,200 calories/day for most women who weigh >165 lbs or who exercise
- 1,200 - 1,600 calories/day for men

### Exercise

Enjoy 30 minutes or more of moderate exercise on most days of the week. Obese patients should gradually ease into their workout routine in order to avoid injury.

### Behavior Modification

Change your habits with techniques designed to help you set achievable goals and control urges to overindulge. Give yourself simple rewards for meeting your goals. Also, try to manage stress and find social support.

### Weight Loss Surgery

Only recommended for patients with severe obesity (BMI  $\geq 40$  or with BMI  $\geq 35$  and other risk factors). Patients must have failed diet and exercise in order for surgery to be an option. Patients must change their dietary habits.

### Prescription Drug Products

Should be used in addition to proper physical activity, diet and behavioral therapy. Drugs are only indicated in patients with a BMI  $\geq 30$  or  $\geq 27$  with other risk factors. Weight loss pills should not be used in healthy weight patients for cosmetic purposes.

## Common Prescription Weight Loss Drugs

DRUG & DOSE	HOW IT WORKS	COMMON SIDE EFFECTS	HOW LONG CAN YOU TAKE IT? HOW MUCH WEIGHT CAN YOU LOSE?
<b>Xenical (Orlistat)</b> 120 mg by mouth three times a day	Blocks 1/3 of fat absorption	Fatty stools, increased urgency/frequency to use rest room, anal leakage, abdominal pain, nausea, decreased absorption of fat soluble vitamins	The use of Xenical for more than 4 years has not been studied. -An average weight loss of 13 lbs in the first year is expected.
<b>Alli (Orlistat) - Available without a prescription</b> 60 mg by mouth three times a day	Same as Xenical	Same as Xenical	- You can take it until you achieve the success you want with weight loss, until a healthy weight is reached. -Weight loss of 5 to 10% of body weight is expected over time
<b>Meridia (Sibutramine)</b> 5-15 mg by mouth everyday	Decreases appetite	Headache, dry mouth, insomnia, constipation	- Safety and effectiveness of Meridia have not been studied past 2 years -Most patients will lose 5-10% of their baseline weight after 6 to 12 months of treatment.
<b>Adipex-P (Phentermine)</b> 15-37.5 mg by mouth every morning	Decreases appetite	Palpitations, fast heart rate, high blood pressure, restlessness, insomnia	-Adipex-P is only indicated for short-term treatment up to 12 weeks -Average weight loss is a fraction of a pound per week in the first few weeks of therapy with less weight loss in the succeeding weeks.

Some disease states such as eating disorders, high blood pressure and cardiac disease may contraindicate these drugs. Consult your physician before starting any weight loss regimen.

Some other less commonly used weight-loss drugs include: diethylpropion (Tenuate), mazindol (Mazanor), benzphetamine (Didrex), and phendimetrazine (Bontril).

Natural products and dietary supplements are not recommended as part of a weight loss program. The only exception to this is Alli, which is the only FDA-approved weight loss drug available over-the-counter. Make sure you check with your doctor before starting any over-the-counter weight loss product.

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