



# FAST FACTS



## Obesity-Related Chronic Diseases

**OBESITY** is a complex chronic disease in which abnormal or excessive accumulation of body fat impairs health. Adult obesity rates have more than doubled since the 1980s — in the U.S. today, obesity affects over 42% of adults and 18% of youth.<sup>1,2</sup> Obesity and its related complications are major drivers of rising healthcare costs, diminished health-related quality of life, and the recent decline in U.S. life expectancy. This fact sheet is part of a series designed to provide basic information about the science of obesity and current strategies to address it.

### What Chronic Diseases are Associated with Obesity?

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Obesity is the leading risk factor for type-2 diabetes and osteoarthritis.
- Obesity is a major risk factor for heart disease and hypertension.
- Obesity is causally linked to 13 different cancers.
- 5 to 10% reductions in body weight can decrease chronic disease risk among persons with obesity.

#### LEARN MORE

*Osteoarthritis*  
*Obesity-Related Cancers*  
*Cancer in Young Adults*



#### DIABETES

- Overweight and obesity increase risks of type-2 diabetes and gestational diabetes.<sup>3</sup>
- Research has shown that losing weight can significantly reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.
  - A 5-7% weight loss together with moderate levels of physical activity (e.g. walking 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week) decreased the number of new type 2 diabetes cases by 58% among people at risk for diabetes<sup>4,5</sup>



#### HEART DISEASE

- Over 80% of patients with coronary heart disease (CHD) have overweight or obesity. Although obesity is sometimes considered a minor CHD risk factor, weight loss can reduce major risk factors like high blood pressure (hypertension), insulin resistance, diabetes mellitus, and dyslipidemia.<sup>6</sup>
  - Obesity increases the risk for hypertension, which damages arteries in the heart, brain, kidneys, and eyes<sup>7</sup>
  - If average BMI is reduced by 5 percent by 2030, over 5 million Americans could be spared from developing obesity-related hypertension<sup>8</sup>



#### CANCER

- Obesity-related cancers include endometrial, esophageal adenocarcinoma, gastric cardia, liver, kidney, multiple myeloma, meningioma, pancreatic, colorectal, gallbladder, breast, ovarian and thyroid cancers.<sup>9</sup>
- According to the CDC, approximately 55% of cancer diagnoses for women and 24% of cancer diagnoses for men are associated with overweight and obesity.<sup>10</sup>
- In 2014, the American Cancer Society calculated that 123,350 new cancer cases were associated with excess body weight in the United States.<sup>11</sup>

Approximately 1 in 4 women and 1 in 8 men gain 44 pounds or more between the ages of 18 and 55 years. New research suggests that preventing excessive weight gain during this period may be a promising target for intervention.

Weight gain  $\geq 44$  pounds during early to middle adulthood significantly **increases chronic disease risk**



## STROKE

- Obesity is associated with cardiometabolic conditions that increase individual long-term risk of heart disease and stroke, including:<sup>8,12</sup>
  - high blood pressure
  - high levels of harmful blood fats (triglycerides)
  - high levels of “bad cholesterol” (low-density lipoprotein, LDL)
  - low levels of “good cholesterol” (high-density lipoprotein, HDL)



## OSTEOARTHRITIS

- Obesity is a major risk factor for development of osteoarthritis (OA), particularly of the knee.
  - Three-quarters of people with OA have overweight or obesity<sup>13</sup>
  - Adults with obesity are up to four times more likely to develop OA of the knee than adults without obesity<sup>14</sup>

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