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Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

Overweight and Obesity

According to the American Obesity Association, 64.5% of adult Americans (about 127 million) are categorized as being overweight or obese. To be overweight or obese means a person has excessive amounts of fat in relation to lean body mass. Body Mass Index (BMI) is a calculation used to determine if a person is overweight (25-29.9 BMI) or obese (30 BMI or more).

Obesity causes at least 300,000 excess deaths in the U.S. each year, and healthcare costs of American adults with obesity amount to nearly \$100 billion. A report from the AARP, Beyond 50.02: A Report to the Nation on Trends in Health Security, found that a much larger portion of the 50 years and older population is obese than in previous years. The study looked at several health factors, including smoking (which has decreased by 29%), cancer screenings, and blood pressure checks. According to the study, although older people are taking more preventive measures, the effects of obesity could cancel out these gains.

A study published in the CDC's May 17, 2002, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, recommended that health care providers spend more time promoting exercise and physical activity for older people to reduce their risk for diseases such as diabetes, a disease often linked to obesity. Research shows that physical activity counseling leads to increases in physical activity among sedentary adults. Five out of 10 Americans age 65-74 are sedentary, and this statistic increases to six out of 10 for those age 75 and older. According to the study, barriers to discussing physical activity with patients may include lack of time, reimbursement, resources, and protocols. Ways to increase physical activity counseling for older people include training, developing materials, and coordinating activities between health care programs and community programs such as senior centers.

For more information on overweight and obesity, visit the resource links below.

General Resource Links:

- [American Obesity Association](#) – Organization focused on changing public policy and perceptions about obesity.(Off Site)
- [NHLBI Obesity Education Initiative](#) – NIH - The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute initiative to help reduce the prevalence of overweight and physical inactivity to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease.(Off Site)



Additional Topics

- ▶ Nutrition

- [Obesity](#) – NIH - List of resources from three NIH institutes.(Off Site)
- [Weight-Control Information Network](#) – NIDDK – NIH – Provide health professionals and consumers with science-based information on obesity, weight control, and nutrition.(Off Site)
- [Nutrition.gov](#) – Links to government nutrition sites, food facts and safety, research, and more.(Off Site)
- [Overweight and Obesity](#) – CDC – Includes definitions, factors, consequences, recommendations, resources and more.(Off Site)
- [Report on Weight-Loss Advertising: An Analysis of Current Trends](#) – FTC – The report examines 300 promotions that appeared in all major forms of media between February and May 2001 and concludes that false or misleading claims are widespread in ads for weight-loss productse.(PDF - Off Site)
- [The Surgeon General's Call To Action To Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesit](#) – Office of the Surgeon General – Addresses fifteen activities as national priorities to prevent and decrease overweight and obesity.(Off Site)

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