



## Impact of Obesity Found on the Scale and Beyond *By Vicky Chen-Yang, MD*

You don't have to be in the medical field to know that obesity is on the rise in adults, children and adolescents. Based on latest data from the CDC, 36.5% of U.S. adults are obese with prevalence among women higher compared with men. Seventeen percent of children are obese. With the significant rates of obesity on the rise, it is now considered a global epidemic

Obesity for adults is defined based on body mass index (see table). In addition to measuring BMI, waist circumference is helpful to assess abdominal fat -- for men a circumference  $\geq 40$  inches and for women  $\geq 35$  inches is high and considered a risk for cardiac and metabolic issues. These include heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol and fatty liver. Anyone with a BMI  $\geq 35$  will have an abnormal waist circumference, so measurement is not needed.

The two most significant factors that contribute to obesity are sedentary lifestyle and high caloric intake. Lack of adequate sleep contributes to a change in

hormones that leads to increased hunger and appetite especially for calorie-dense foods with high carbohydrates. Most people require at least seven hours of sleep per night to prevent the hormone changes. The importance of a healthy diet and daily exercise cannot be emphasized enough in order to maintain a proper weight.

For those whose obesity started prior to 40 years of age, health risks are highest probably due to the longer time period over which conditions such as diabetes mellitus and hypertension can develop. The greater the BMI, the higher the increased rate of death from all causes and from cardiovascular disease. In the Framingham study, those who were obese, at age 40 lived six to seven years less than those with normal BMIs.

The most common medical conditions associated with obesity are diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, heart disease, heart failure and stroke. Less talked about are gout, osteoarthritis, liver disease and cirrhosis, gallstones, gastric reflux, sleep apnea and even

cancer. If you are overweight or obese, talk to your doctor about strategies to lose weight and maintain a healthy exercise program.

### Determining Your BMI

BMI is calculated based on your weight and height according to the formula:

$$BMI = \frac{wt \text{ (kilograms)}}{(height \text{ (in meter)})^2}$$

Normal weight BMI: 18.5 to 24.9

Overweight BMI: 25 – 29.9

Obesity BMI: 30 – 39.9

Severe/morbid obesity BMI:  $\geq 40$  (or  $\geq 35$  in presence of other chronic medical conditions).

An interesting note: In Asian and South Asian populations, cutoff for overweight is 23 – 24.9 and obesity is  $\geq 25$ .

## Suite G-2 Gets a Facelift

If you are one of many patients who walked into the Glendale Suite G-2 office in the past month and walked out thinking you went to the wrong location, you're not alone! The suite was recently remodeled to accommodate all non-internist medical specialists. This includes Neurology (Dr. Johnson and Dr. Habiger), Dermatology (Dr. Bird), Podiatry (Dr. Tassone) and Audiology (Dr. Blaylock). The reception area was reconfigured and updated and administrative areas were relocated.

### LOCATIONS

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