

Services Provided:

- Individual therapy
- Group therapy
- Pre-surgical evaluations
- Psychological evaluations

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Obesity

Obesity represents one of the most significant public health problems currently having the United States. National data indicate that 31% of adults in the U.S. are obese and an additional 34% are overweight (Flegal et al., 2002).

Obesity is a disorder of energy balance that develops when energy intake exceeds energy expenditure (Epstein, 1993). Obesity is most commonly measured by using the body mass index (BMI; Jeffery et al., 2000), which is calculated by dividing weight in kilograms by height in meters squared. Almost 25% of children and adolescents in the United

States are obese, and increase of more than 20% in the past decade (Troiano, et al., 1995). In adults in the United States, the prevalence rates increased 33% in the 1980s (Williamson, 1995). More than one half of all U.S. citizens exceed the newest definition of obesity (BMI \geq 25) (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute [NHLBI] Obesity Education Initiative Expert Panel, 1998).

Eating disorders constitute a spectrum of clinical syndromes that result not from a single cause but from the interplay of psychological, biological, and sociocultural factors (Romano &

Halmi, 1997). Obesity is also included among the eating disorders but is not considered a mental disorder (Erickson, Yager, & Seeger 1998). The severity of obesity is defined in terms of body weight percentage higher than that recommended for a person's age and height: mild is 20% to 40% higher, moderate is 40% to 100% higher, and morbid is more than 100% higher (Erickson et al., 1998).

This is the seventh of our monthly CHP newsletters. Please feel free to email us with topic requests, questions, etc. for future issues.

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Obesity and Depression www.obesityaction.org

Individuals with excess weight often suffer from depression. Increased appetite, reduced activity, and weight gain can be symptoms of depression, and people with depression are more likely to binge eat and less likely to exercise regularly. One recent study found that overall, obese individuals have a 20% elevated risk of depression, and specifically for Caucasian college-educated people with obesity, the risk rises to 44% (Engstrom, 2008).

There are

many possibilities for depression to accompany obesity. Childhood obesity frequently leads to ridicule and exclusion from peer activities. Problems with body image, social isolation, and self-esteem might easily follow. Being seriously overweight at any age is a major source of dissatisfaction, sadness and frustration. Extra pounds often cause chronic joint and extremity pain, making individuals less able to get around and enjoy life.

Serious illness such as diabetes, hypertension, and sleep apnea can

threaten or shorten life, and people with excess weight are often stereotyped and discriminated against by airlines, department stores, insurance companies, and even doctors.

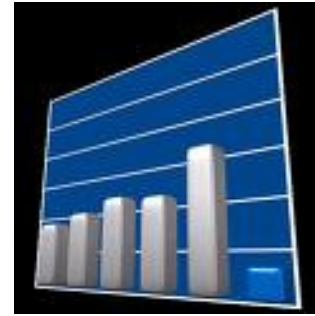
Several studies have found significant improvements in depression following major weight loss. This has been found in large groups after gastric restrictive procedures (Engstrom, 2008).

Tips for avoiding depression after treatment include: exercise, get rid of anger, keep a positive attitude, don't take yourself too seriously, stay motivated, talk to someone, and use medications as prescribed.



Obesity Statistics

- About two-thirds of adults in the United States are overweight, and almost one-third are obese (NHANES, 2001-2004)
- Obesity may promote breast cancer because of the effects of adipose tissue on epithelial cell growth (Guthrie & Carroll, 1999) or on the production of estrogen among postmenopausal women (Mezzetti et al., 1998)
- Obesity has been associated with an increased risk of colon, endometrial, and gall bladder cancer (Ford, 1999; Pi-Sunyer, 1998)
- Environmental factors that affect body fat may include energy intake, physical activity, smoking, and alcohol intake (Bar-Or et al., 1998)
- Risk for obesity is greater among older adults, women, and members of racial or ethnic minorities (Broussard et al., 1991; Sobel & Stunkard, 1989)
- Childhood obesity increases the risk for hypertension, hypercholesterolemia, hyperinsulinemia, decreased release of growth hormone, respiratory disorders, and orthopedic problems (Epstein, 1993).
- Enhancing motivation and teaching maintenance skills are other important components of successful weight loss programs (Jeffery et al., 2000)
- Reducing caloric intake by 500 to 1,000 calories per day has been shown to result in a weight loss of 1 to 2 pounds per week (National Heart Lung, and Blood Institute's Obesity Education Initiative Expert Panel, 1998).
- Obesity has been shown to be positively associated with death from cancers of the breast, uterus, cervix, and ovary among women and with death from prostate cancer among men (Calle et al., 2003).



Treatment of Adult Obesity

Research has shown that short-term weight loss is clearly achievable for adults, but long-term weight loss has been more successful for children and adolescents. Individuals typically lost weight rapidly for the first few months, with their maximum weight loss occurring at about 6 months. They then gradually gain weight until they stabilize at a weight somewhat below baseline levels (Jeffery et al., 2000).

- The rate of initial weight loss is an important determinant of the magnitude of long-term weight loss (Jeffery et al., 2000). Recently this area of research has em-



phasized finding ways to increase initial weight loss.

- The choice of one specific dietary prescription over another does not have much of an empirical basis. Dietary prescriptions that are based on fat intake versus total calorie intake have been equally effective for short-term and long-term weight loss. Adding a strong exercise component to behavioral treatment for obesity improves weight

loss in the short-term and has potential for improving long-term weight maintenance (Pavlou, Krey, & Steffee, 1989; Sikand et al., 1988).

- Enhancing motivation and teaching maintenance skills are other important components of successful weight loss programs (Jeffery et al., 2000)
- Small but significant short- and long-term benefits result from including spouses and friends in obesity treatment (Black, Gleser, & Kooyers, 1990)

Obesity is a complex trait influenced by social, behavioral, and physiological factors, and it has profound public health implications. The most successful treatment of obesity includes changing diet and exercise patterns.