

# Diabetes and Obesity

According to WHO global statistics, at least 2.8 million people die every year as a result of either being obese or overweight. Whereas this used to be a major problem in developed countries, now it is prevalent in middle- and low-income countries too. In 2008, over 40 million preschool children were found to be obese worldwide.

WHO defines obesity as a complex health concern that can damage your body which results from abnormal accumulation of fat. The common measurement used to determine obesity is the Body Mass Index (BMI). A normal BMI is between 18.5 to 24.99. A reading of between 25 to 29.99 is considered overweight, and above 30 being obese.

Obesity can be inherited or result from environmental, food or exercise choices. In most cases, it affects folks with a sedentary lifestyle or poor people with limited food choices and who suffer from malnutrition. It increases the risks of developing heart problems, kidney problems, cancer, respiratory infections, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, etc.

Approximately 90% of people living with diabetes are either overweight or obese. In this article, we will focus on two ways in which obesity triggers type 2 diabetes.

## **Disruption in fat metabolism**

Studies show that obesity tends to trigger some changes to the body's metabolism. Such changes cause the adipose tissue also known as the fat tissue to release fat molecules into the blood. When fat is present in the blood, the insulin-responsive cells are affected resulting in a reduction in insulin sensitivity. Also, there is a theory from the scientists' stating that obesity brings prediabetes, a metabolic condition that in most cases develops into type 2 diabetes.

## **Inflammatory response**

According to WHO, abdominal fat makes the fat cells release the pro-inflammatory chemicals. These chemicals make the body less sensitive to the insulin it is producing hence disrupting the role of insulin-responsive cells and their capacity to respond to insulin.

## **Preventing Obesity**

Obesity is so much linked to type 2 diabetes. Diabetic or not, if you are currently overweight, you are at a greater risk of becoming obese.

To prevent weight and fat associated problems, take these steps to lose/ maintain a healthy weight.

1. **Eat a balanced diet-** Try a low calorie but nutrient rich diet with vegetables, fruits, proteins, and low carbs. Limit intake of junk food. You can consult your nutritionist should you need guidance on what to eat and what to moderate.
2. **Exercise regularly-** Aim for at least 30 minutes of cardiovascular and strength training exercises daily. You can start by walking and increase the intensity as you go.
3. **Check your weight regularly-** This can help you see if your efforts are bearing fruits and know what works for you so you can do more of it.

4. **Manage emotional eating-** Journal what you eat, when, how much and if you are hungry when you eat. This may not work for everybody, but it can help you determine food traps and stressors that cause you to eat even when you are not hungry.

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