

Obesity and Health Risk

Received: January 05, 2021; **Accepted:** January 19, 2021; **Published:** January 26, 2021

Introduction

Obesity is defined differently depending on who you ask. Overweight and obesity, in general, refer to a weight that is higher than what is considered healthy. Obesity is a chronic disease characterised by an excess of body fat. For energy storage, thermal insulation, shock absorption, and other purposes, a specific quantity of body fat is required. Obesity is best defined by the BMI. The person's height and weight determines his body mass index. The Body Mass Index (BMI) is calculated by multiplying a person's weight in kilogrammes (kg) by their height in metres (m) (more information will be found later in the article). Because BMI measures weight in proportion to height, there is a strong link between total body fat content and BMI in adults. Adults with a BMI of 25-29.9 are overweight, whereas adults with a BMI of 30 or above are obese. A BMI of 18.5-24.9 indicates that a person's weight is normal. If a person's BMI is greater than 30, he or she is grossly obese (severe obesity).

Major Health Risks

Patients with a BMI greater than 40 have a shorter lifespan. Obesity also raises the chance of acquiring a variety of chronic illnesses, such as the ones listed below:

Insulin Resistance: Insulin is required for the transportation of blood glucose (sugar) into muscle and fat cells (which the body uses for energy). Insulin keeps blood glucose levels in the normal range by transferring glucose into cells. Insulin Resistance (IR) is a condition in which insulin's ability to transfer glucose (sugar) into cells is reduced. Because fat cells are more insulin resistant than muscle cells, obesity is a major cause of insulin resistance. Insulin resistance causes the pancreas to produce more insulin at first. Blood glucose levels stay normal as long as the pancreas produces enough insulin to overcome this resistance. Insulin resistance can continue for years, characterised by normal blood glucose levels and elevated insulin levels. Blood glucose levels begin to rise when the pancreas can no longer keep up with generating high quantities of insulin.

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Citation: Johnson AK (2021) Obesity and Health Risk. J Nutraceuticals Food Sci Vol.6 No.0:29

Hypertension

Obese individuals are more likely to develop hypertension. According to a Norwegian study, weight growth increased blood pressure in women more than it did in males.

Heart attack

A prospective research revealed that women with a BMI more than 29 had a three to fourfold increased risk of coronary artery disease. According to a Finnish research, the risk of mortality from coronary artery disease rose by 1% for every 1 kilogramme (2.2 pounds) rise in body weight. Obesity has been linked to an increased risk of a second heart attack in people who have already had one.

Cancer

Obesity raises the chance of colon cancer in both men and women, as well as cancers of the rectum and prostate in males and gallbladder and uterus in women. Obesity has been linked to breast cancer in women after menopause, especially in postmenopausal women. Fat tissue plays a key role in oestrogen production, and chronic oestrogen exposure raises the risk of breast cancer.

Apart from this aforementioned major health risk due to obesity some other risk are osteoarthritis, gout, strokes and high cholesterol etc.