



OBESITY AND SOUTH ASIANS

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

- Overweight, obesity and an inactive lifestyle increase the chances of disease such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and cancer.¹
- The terms overweight and obesity refer to a person's overall body weight.²
 - Overweight: Having extra body weight from muscle, bone, fat, and/or water.
 - Obesity: Having high amount of extra body fat.
- Overweight and obesity are the result of several factors.³
 - Increased body weight results from an energy imbalance that causes more calories to be stored than burned.
 - Body weight is also the result of genetics, behavior, the environment, culture, physiology, and socioeconomic status.
 - Behavior and environment are two important factors upon which parents (or families) can have the most influence.
- Obesity and overweight are measured by a person's body mass (or level of fatness).
- South Asian children are more likely to become obese (compared with whites and blacks), with obesity rates of 25.7% for boys and 26.2% for girls, respectively.⁴



- South Asians have a greater risk for heart disease because they have higher levels of triglycerides (bad cholesterol) and lower levels of HDL (good cholesterol).⁵
- South Asians tend to have substantially greater body fat, in particular abdominal fat, than whites.⁶
 - Having excessive fat tissue in and around the abdomen is also referred to as metabolic syndrome.
 - People with metabolic syndrome are at increased risk for heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, and diabetes, among others.⁷

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS⁸

- Having extra fat around the waist;
- Inability to exercise as much as one used to be able to exercise previously; and/or,
- Scale showing you have gained too much weight.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- It is recommended that children and adolescents participate in at least 30 minutes of physical activity at least 5 days a week to stay healthy and to prevent overweight and obesity.

- In addition to preventing or reducing overweight and obesity, physical activity can increase bone mass and muscular strength, and can reduce blood pressure, anxiety, and stress during childhood and into adulthood.
- If necessary, treatment for overweight and obesity includes incorporating lifestyle changes as well as other behavioral modifications.
- Visit with your (or your child's) health care provider periodically to discuss issues related to physical exercise, proper nutrition and maintaining a healthy weight.



RESOURCES

National

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
Website: www.cdc.gov/obesity

The Obesity Society
Phone: (301) 563.0526
Website: www.obesity.org

California

First 5 California
Phone (916) 263-1050
Website: www.cffc.ca.gov

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¹ World Health Organization. Obesity and Overweight Facts. Available at:

www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/publications/facts/obesity/en/. Accessed 10 August 2010.

² National Heart Lung and Blood Institute. Disease and Conditions Index. What is Overweight and Obesity? Available at: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/obe/obe_whatare.html. Accessed 10 August 2010.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Misra A., Khurana L. *Obesity and Metabolic Syndrome in Developing Countries*. The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism. 2008; 93: s9-s30.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Rush E, Plank L, Chandu V, et al. Body Size, Body Composition, and Fat Distribution: A Comparison of Young New Zealand Men of European, Pacific Island, and Asian Indian Ethnicities. N Z Med J 2004; 117: U1203.

⁷ American Heart Association. What is metabolic syndrome: Available at: www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4756. Accessed 4 October 2010.

⁸ National Heart Lung and Blood Institute. Disease and Conditions Index. What are the signs and symptoms of overweight and obesity? Available at: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/obe/obe_signsandymptoms.html. Accessed 10 August 2010.

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