

thinking ahead...

 Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc.



for your company
for your employees
for your future
July 30, 2012

WELLNESS WEEKLY

Get Healthy & Beat Obesity



During the past 20 years there has been a dramatic increase in obesity in the United States. Overweight and obesity are both labels for ranges of weight that are greater than what is generally considered healthy for a given height. The terms also identify ranges of weight that have been shown to increase the likelihood of certain diseases and other health problems.

For adults, overweight and obesity ranges are determined by using weight and height to calculate a number called the “body mass index” (BMI). BMI is used because, for most people, it correlates with their amount of body fat.

- An adult who has a BMI between 25 and 29.9 is considered overweight.
- An adult who has a BMI of 30 or higher is considered obese.

It's important to remember that although BMI correlates to the amount of body fat, BMI doesn't directly measure body fat. As a result, some people, like athletes, may have a BMI that identifies them as overweight even though they don't have excess body fat.

BMI is just one indicator of potential health risks associated with being overweight or obese. For assessing someone's likelihood of developing overweight- or obesity-related diseases, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute guidelines recommend looking at two other predictors:

- The individual's waist circumference (because abdominal fat is a predictor of risk for obesity-related diseases).
- Other risk factors the individual has for diseases and conditions associated with obesity (for example, high blood pressure or physical inactivity).

When it comes to maintaining a healthy weight for a lifetime, the bottom line is – calories count! Weight management is all about balance – balancing the number of calories you consume with the number of calories your body uses or “burns off.”

- A calorie is defined as a unit of energy supplied by food. A calorie is a calorie regardless of its source. Whether you're eating carbohydrates, fats, sugars, or proteins, all of them contain calories.
- Caloric balance is like a scale. To remain in balance and maintain your body weight, the calories consumed (from foods) must be balanced by the calories used (in normal body functions, daily activities, and exercise).

Genetics and the environment may increase the risk of personal weight gain. However, the choices a person makes in eating and physical activity also contributes to overweight and obesity.

Losing weight successfully depends on:

- your enthusiasm and motivation
- setting realistic goals
- establishing lifestyle changes in eating and exercise pattern

Proper nutrition and regular exercise are the safest ways to keep your weight down. Most of all, they help you stay both healthy and fit for life.