

The shocking truth about OBESITY

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Obesity is a medical condition in which a person has accumulated excess body fat to the extent that it has a negative effect on their physical and often mental health.

The UK currently has the highest prevalence of obesity in Europe and according to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) approximately 24% of women and 25% of men aged 16 and over in England were classified as obese in 2012 compared with 16.4% of all adults in England being overweight and obese in 1995 and only 8% in 1980. Prevalence is higher where there is social deprivation, socioeconomic factors and in individuals with lower levels of educational achievement.

Worldwide, obesity is a leading preventable cause of death and has been categorised as a serious public health problem. With the increasing levels of obesity, coupled with an escalating number of patients being diagnosed with diabetes, the situation is rapidly taking on the appearance of an epidemic; one that causes mortality, morbidity and enormous costs to the NHS as well as becoming an

economic burden on the country as a whole. Public Health England (PHE) predict that by 2050, obesity will affect 60% of men, 50% of women and 25% of children in England, with costs projected to reach £9.7 billion and wider costs to society relating to obesity are estimated to reach £49.9 billion per year.

Obesity can cause many chronic diseases including heart disease, hypertension, fertility problems, liver disease, strokes, sleep apnea and breathing problems, also increasing the likelihood of up to 80% of developing type 2 diabetes. Being obese can put pressure and strain on joints and limbs making activity difficult and movement painful. In addition, obesity can reduce your life expectancy by up to 9 years. Being obese can also have physiological effects on the body including depression, anxiety, low self esteem and low quality of life leading to social effects where it is more likely to suffer prejudice and discrimination, have fewer friends and lower employment and educational attainment.

Modern lifestyles often promote cheap, high calorie foods and being sedentary majority of the time. There are many health benefits to losing weight through diet and exercise. Eating a calorie-controlled diet decreasing the amount of fats and sugars and increasing the amount of fibre, fruit and vegetables, coupled with regular exercise will have a positive effect on weight loss. Losing weight will also lower mortality, specifically diabetes and heart disease as well as reducing blood pressure and improving liver, kidney and lung function. Eating a healthy diet, drinking plenty of water and exercising regularly will not only encourage weight loss but also improve skin condition, strengthen bones and nails and make hair look revived and shiny!

It is important to consult your GP if you feel that your weight is affecting your wellbeing to gain the appropriate support and advice. If you're feeling that your jeans are slightly tight or you want to shed some weight for summer, log on to NHS Choices website and sign up for the 12 week "Losing weight - Getting Started" programme.