

The Health Impacts of being Overweight

Carrying extra weight might be seen as just a bit of a nuisance; something you'd prefer not to have, so you can look better. But it also affects other aspects of your day-to-day life in ways in which you may not be aware. As well as increasing the risk of disease, obesity can cause the following problems:

Snoring: One of the first parts of the body that gains weight is the tongue. This blocks the wind-pipe and causes that ZZZZ sound that occurs while sleeping. It might sound funny, but it's also dangerous. It signals a lack of oxygen getting through to the organs of the body and can lead to high blood pressure and potential heart disease. This can often be reduced within a couple of weeks of starting a weight loss program.

Excessive daytime sleepiness: If you're a snorer and/or suffer what is known as 'obstructive sleep apnea', where you regularly stop breathing during the night, you're likely to feel tired during the day, particularly after lunch when you might drop off to sleep at the desk at work. Changing your diet can help this in a short time.

Bad back: If you carry extra weight on the front of your body (like a man), it puts extra pressure on the lower back. You may not have been aware of it but that bad back can be due almost totally to being overweight.

'Arthritis': Pains in the knees, hips and ankles are often confused with arthritis in overweight people. Because this makes walking painful, there is a tendency to avoid movement and this, in turn, can make you fatter. This type of joint pain is often due to the mechanical pressure on the joints of the extra body weight. As the weight goes, so will the pain. Weight supportive exercise like walking in water or riding a bike can help.

Sexual problems: Fertility is known to decrease with increases in body weight in women. In men, there is an inverse association between the male hormone testosterone, and a 'pot belly'. A man's libido therefore, as well as his sexual performance, may be affected by his body weight.

'Asthma': Like arthritis, asthma-like symptoms often exist in overweight people because of the extra pressure on the diaphragm, or breathing apparatus of the body. True asthma does also exist and you'll need your doctor to check this. In any case, losing some weight can help manage the problem and improve your ability to move around better.

Skin itch: Itchiness under the feet, breasts or folds of fat can be due to skin problems associated with obesity. Keeping the area 'aired' and losing some weight can help.

For more information on obesity and managing medical conditions go to www.lifestylemedicine.net.au
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