

Obesity

Do you know that about one third of American population is obese? And the trend is increasing? That is true according to the recent National Center of Health Statistics.

How do we define Obesity?

There are different ways to define obesity but one simple formula gives us very good estimate of a person's weight status whether it is healthy or not. It is called *Body Mass Index (BMI)*. It takes into account of person's weight and height.

< 18	underweight
18 - 24.9	healthy weight
25 - 29.9	overweight
30 - >	obesity

Obesity is a risk factor of many diseases including the followings:

- Coronary artery disease, Heart attack
- Diabetes mellitus
- High blood pressure
- Sleep apnea
- Stroke
- Osteoarthritis
- Liver and gall bladder disease
- Infertility
- Cancers of Uterus, Breast and Colon
- High Cholesterol

Our lifestyle is the main cause of obesity. We eat more, do very little physical work. Our body weight depends on the balance between the Calories we eat and the Calories we burn. Some of these Calories are burnt to run different body systems even when we are resting or sleeping. Usually we burn 1 Calorie/Kg/hour. This is *Basal Metabolic Rate*. Any physical activity we do burns additional Calories. If a person weighs 70 Kg, his Basal Metabolic Rate will be $70 \times 24 = 1680$ Calories per 24 hours. Routine works like walking, climbing stairs, driving, sitting, reading

and writing burn additional Calories; probably additional 300 in a day. If this person wants to maintain his/her current weight of 70 Kg he/she would need roughly 1980 Calories a day. But if that person is taking higher number of Calories than 1980 that extra number of Calories is stored in the body as fat. On the other hand if this person wants to lose weight he/she should either cut down the daily Caloric intake below 1980 or increase his/her physical activity level to burn more Calories.

It's so easy to gain weight because food gives us pleasure. Do you know that to burn off one Big Mac you have to run for 5 miles? Food plays very important role in achieving and maintaining healthy weight as does the physical activity. If you remember that any gain or loss in weight is dependent on how much Calories we take and how much we burn. By simply decreasing the portion of our meals we can lose significant amount of weight. Increasing physical activity also boosts up BMR burning more Calories.

There is an old saying – eat to live, do not live to eat.