

Obesity: Are You at Risk?

Preventive recommendations from Aurora Health Care:

Periodic height and weight measurements are recommended for adults and children. Other measurements may include body mass index (BMI), waist-hip circumference ratio (WHR), and assessment of other risk factors.

How is obesity defined?

Obesity is defined in three ways:

- Mild obesity – 20% to 40% above your upper limit of normal weight by sex, age and height.
- Moderate obesity – 41% to 100% above your upper limit of normal weight.
- Morbid obesity – 100% or more above your upper limit of normal weight.

What are the risks of weighing too much?

Overweight people are more likely to have diabetes, high blood pressure, and risk factors for other diseases. Obesity is a risk factor for heart disease and may raise the risk for several kinds of cancer.

The more extra weight you have, the more at risk you are for many health problems. Obesity can also affect how much activity you can do and how you feel about yourself.

How do I know what I should weigh?

Talk with your health care provider, who will have guidelines to help you. But keep in mind that few people fit perfectly into a chart or graph. You and your health care provider will want to discuss several things in setting your goal weight. These include your age, body shape, family history, and the lowest weight you've been able to stay at easily.

Why have I always gained back what I lost?

You may have lost weight too fast on past diets. A loss of ½ to 1 pound a week is best for keeping weight off.

You may have returned to your “old ways of eating” after losing weight. Keeping weight off means making changes in your lifestyle.

You may not have exercised in the past. Exercise is a key factor in losing weight and keeping it off.

How do I get started this time?

First, stop dieting! Think about a long-term plan for gradual changes in your eating habits and activity. Ask your health care provider for more information. You will want to work toward:

- **Healthier eating**, one step at a time. Gradually eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, while eating less fat.
- **Regular exercise**, to help you burn calories and build muscle. Begin slowly and follow the plan recommended for you.
- **Realistic goals** you can live with. Trust in your own judgement combined with that of your health care provider.