



In this newsletter, we will discuss how obesity is categorized and review a science-based approach to managing weight.

# A tailored approach to managing obesity

Understanding how obesity is classified and reviewing an individual's weight history can help make it easier for people to determine the most appropriate approach for managing their weight.

## Body Mass Index (BMI):<sup>1</sup>

- A person's weight can be classified using BMI, and these categories can range from normal to Obesity Class III. As we have learned, the risk of developing health complications increases with higher BMI values.

Remember, BMI is calculated by:  
 $BMI = \text{Weight (kg)} / \text{Height}^2 (\text{m}^2)$

To calculate your BMI, visit [unlockfood.ca/en/Articles/Weight-Loss/BMI-Calculator.aspx](https://unlockfood.ca/en/Articles/Weight-Loss/BMI-Calculator.aspx)



BMI  
18.5–24.9  
Normal Weight



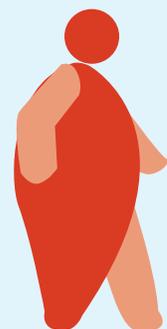
BMI  
25.0–29.9  
Overweight



BMI  
30.0–34.9  
Obesity Class I



BMI  
35.0–39.9  
Obesity Class II



BMI  
 $\geq 40.0$   
Obesity Class III

While BMI is the most common way to measure obesity, it is limited by the fact that it only considers an individual's height and weight and does not consider the unique characteristics of each individual person. There are other methods, such as the **Edmonton Obesity Staging System (EOSS)**, which offers a more complete and compassionate approach to the classification of obesity, as it measures the impact of the disease on a person's quality of life. Using the EOSS method, a person's health can be ranked from Stage 0 (no obesity-related health risks) to Stage 4, where a person's weight can severely impact their well-being.<sup>1</sup>

The Canadian Medical Association has created guidelines, based on the input from various healthcare professionals, that outline the ideal approach to treat obesity and prevent its associated health complications:<sup>2</sup>

### Behavioural changes



**Nutrition:** Eating healthy and decreasing the daily number of calories we consume is an important first step in obesity management. The goal is to develop long-term and sustainable healthy dietary habits, and not resort to extreme diets.<sup>1,2</sup>



**Physical activity:** Although increased physical activity may not be enough to cause weight loss on its own, it is important to incorporate it into any weight management plan. It can have a wide range of benefits including improved overall health, decreased stress, and improved confidence.<sup>1-3</sup>



**Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT):** Cognitive-behavioural therapy helps people identify thoughts and feelings that can lead to unhealthy behaviours. It can also help with managing stress, which can be a factor in the development of obesity. Finding better ways to cope with these unhealthy habits can help people while on their weight management journey.<sup>2</sup>

## Pharmacotherapy



There are medications available that can help adults lose weight and keep it off. These medications are usually recommended when changes in behaviour, like dietary changes and increased physical activity, are not sufficient for long-term weight loss in individuals who have a BMI  $\geq 27$  kg/m<sup>2</sup> and suffer from weight-related health conditions or those with a BMI  $\geq 30$  kg/m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>2</sup>

## Bariatric surgery



Bariatric surgeries (weight loss surgeries) help people lose weight by making changes to the digestive system that limit how much food can be eaten or absorbed. While it can be effective, as with any surgical procedure, it does involve greater risk than other weight management methods. Therefore, it is usually considered for people with a BMI of  $\geq 35$  kg/m<sup>2</sup> who are living with obesity-related health complications or a BMI of  $\geq 40$  kg/m<sup>2</sup> when other treatments have been unsuccessful.<sup>2</sup>

**The overall goal of obesity treatment is to reach and maintain a healthy weight, which may improve overall health and reduce the risk of weight-related health complications. Every individual has their own unique healthy weight, which is the weight a person can reach and maintain while living the healthiest lifestyle they can truly enjoy.<sup>4,5</sup>**

## Hear from someone living with obesity

*"I think it is important for our healthcare system to pay attention to helping people living with obesity because when you help someone lose the weight and show them how to maintain that weight, it is [like] preventative medicine."*

With our current understanding of obesity as a chronic disease, it has become increasingly important to understand which weight management strategies can help in the long term. While there is a lot of information available to the public on how to manage weight, the strategies mentioned above are the most recommended. Given that obesity is a complex disorder with many contributing factors, a combination of treatments is often needed.<sup>1</sup>

Taking the first step and discussing your weight with a healthcare professional can help you determine which strategies will best help you establish your personal weight-loss objectives and reach your health goals.

### Want to learn more?

For additional information about weight management strategies and how they can help you or someone you care about:



Visit Obesity Canada



Speak with your  
healthcare professional



Contact your human  
resources department



### We want to hear from you!

Email us at [NNCICustomerCare@novonordisk.com](mailto:NNCICustomerCare@novonordisk.com)  
to share your ideas and comments.

In the next newsletter, we will take a closer look at the types of behavioural modifications that can help with weight management.

**References:** 1. Obesity Canada. 5As of Obesity Management. Available at: [www.obesitycanada.ca](http://www.obesitycanada.ca). Retrieved November 2018. 2. Lau DCW, et al. 2006 Canadian clinical practice guidelines on the management and prevention of obesity in adults and children. *CMAJ*. 2007;176(8):1-117. 3. Diabetes Canada. Benefits of Physical Activity. 2019. Available at: <https://www.diabetes.ca/DiabetesCanadaWebsite/media/Managing-My-Diabetes/Tools%20and%20Resources/benefits-of-physical-activity.pdf?ext=.pdf>. Retrieved September 27, 2019. 4. Freedhoff Y, et al. *Best weight: A practical guide to office-based obesity management*. Obesity Canada; 2010. 5. Mayo Clinic. Obesity Diagnosis and Treatment. 2019. Available at: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/obesity/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20375749>. Retrieved October 2, 2019.