

# Fighting against obesity

[Health & Medicine](#), [Obesity](#)



Fighting Against Obesity Societies worldwide are discovering new ways to combat the threat of obesity. Though there are many methods in which this can be done, most experts would agree that a healthy diet and adequate exercise is not only effective but one of the safest methods when treating obesity. But before we assess the methods in which to fight obesity, a definition of obesity must be given. It is also imperative to accurately define a healthy diet as well as a manageable exercise routine for an obese person. Obesity, as defined by The Merck Manual of Medical Information, is the accumulation of excessive body fat and though being overweight can be seen as the same thing, there is a distinction which exists between the two. This distinction can be made by utilizing a number known as the body mass index, which is calculated by dividing a person's weight by their height in meters squared. It is said a person whose body mass index number is thirty or more can be officially diagnosed as an obese person. Like the many methods that exist to treat obesity, there are many causes as well. Generally, the consumption of more calories than the body needs can directly result in that person's obesity. A person whose diet is high in fat instead of proteins and carbohydrates is more likely to retain more calories because of a chemical reaction which occurs when foods high in fats are consumed. Research shows that foods high in fat do not trigger the satiety response as quickly as other foods would therefore, a diet which is high in fat would cause a person to consume more foods in order for the satiety or stop-eating response to be triggered. Also, the caloric content of fatty food is twice as high as other foods such as proteins or carbohydrates. Other factors which can cause obesity are the genetic makeup of a person as well as their

surroundings. Scientists have discovered that certain mutations to a specific gene within a person's body which is responsible for telling the body to decrease food intake and increase the calories being burned is altered, so that a person keeps consuming food without burning any calories. Also, a person whose surroundings are conducive to an unhealthy lifestyle such as living in an area where fast food restaurants are abundant, are more prone to develop obesity as opposed to a person who is not surrounded by these types of places. Today there is a variety of treatments designed to combat and ultimately reverse obesity. These methods range from drugs and surgery to diet and exercise and though these methods prove themselves to be very effective, some of them may also have negative side effects. The introduction of dietary drugs as a way of combating obesity has proven to be immensely effective but also dangerous simply because of the side effects and complications experienced when taking certain drugs. There is also another aspect that must be considered when taking prescription drugs and that is addiction. According to the National Institute On drug abuse an estimated 7.0 million are currently addicted to prescription drugs but it does not stop there, more and more people worldwide are becoming addicted to prescription medication which does the person more harm than good. An alternate method for treatment of obesity would be for an obese person to undergo surgery but, the risk factor of this method is very high. There is always a chance that complications may occur during surgery which may result in death; it must also be noted that it would take more than one surgical procedure to completely reverse the effects of obesity which, can not only be costly but life threatening. Therefore it would seem that of the

afore mentioned methods of treating obesity the ones which carry the least risk would be diet and exercise. When an obese person is considering a change in diet, it is recommended that a diary is made keeping track of the foods being consumed while taking into account the amount of calories each meal contains. By doing this a person who suffers from obesity can have a visual of the changes in diet that need to be made. Dieting can only be effective when permanent changes are made to the person's eating habits. For this reason, programs which teach persons who suffer from obesity how to gradually make these changes to their diet exist. An example of some of the changes that could be made to a person's diet are the inclusion of complex carbohydrates such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains while eliminating foods high in fats. The inclusion of complex carbohydrates is important because of their longer digestion period, this allows an obese person to eat less but feel fuller longer. It is imperative to note that when an obese person decides to diet they must gradually decrease the amount of calories they usually intake. A sudden decline in calorie intake could negatively affect the body and result in serious harm to an obese person's internal organs. Though dieting is a powerful tool when fighting obesity, its effectiveness can be increased when coupled with exercise. An increase in physical activity is imperative to someone who has already begun to lose weight when dieting because, it ultimately stops weight from being regained. It is commonly suggested that a person who is obese adapt an exercise regime that is specifically tailored to their capabilities. For most obese patients, a gradual increase in physical activity is recommended ranging from walking or swimming at a slow pace to something as everyday as

gardening as suggested by Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in adults. Overtime, depending on the obese person's progress they are able to perform more strenuous activity. Studies show that by performing this task an obese person is able to burn at least one thousand calories per week which is one more step in the direction of ultimately treating their obesity. It is evident that the risk which comes along with diet and exercise are seemingly non-existent when compared to other methods used to treat obesity. This essay shows that drugs and surgery often carry side effects which can ultimately result in life threatening complications or even death while diet and exercise has proven to only have positive side effects when done correctly thus appearing to be the safest choice when an obese person decides to make a potentially lifesaving decision.