

Obesity as a major health issue

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



Obesity is a major health issue not simply in Western countries but in the Philippines as well. We are extremely engaged in the long-standing issue of malnutrition and hunger in our country that we also forgot about the increasing rates of obesity.

As indicated by Asia Roundtable on Food Innovation for Improved Nutrition (ARoFIIN), “ Among the six countries studied, the Philippines has the second-lowest obesity and overweight prevalence at 5. 1 percent and 23. 6 percent, respectively. But despite low prevalence rates, obesity has a strong impact in the Philippines due to a large number of obese persons in the country—18 million Filipinos are obese and overweight.”

While the nation recently launched the Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition (PPAN) 2017-2022 with obesity and overweight as one of the pillars, the report states that obesity is still not a high priority despite it being recognized as an issue. People perceive obesity is caused by the individual him/herself, through overeating and physical inactivity. Judgment aggravates the social stigma for many obese individuals. In spite of what most people think, people can be obese for many different reasons.

Firstly, obesity is a result of poor diet and lifestyle choices such as eating a large number of junk foods. People who are obese are fond of eating greasy foods such as burgers, pizza, and French fries. Obese people eat plenty of foods that are high in sugar in fat which is not good for the health. We should be more aware of what we are eating and we must eat healthier foods that are low in calories. Cutting back on foods containing sugar, fat, and salt will be very beneficial to our health. Individuals who are more likely to feel out of

control and stressed used food as their temporary relief. Emotional eaters are likewise likely to eat junk foods. In addition, in this modern era, people prefer to buy dinner instead of preparing home-cooked foods. This likewise caused by their long working hours in their job or office. This can be solved by cooking healthier foods than to buy or deliver fast foods.

Leading a sedentary lifestyle is additionally one of the causes of obesity. Many adults engage in far less physical activity and most children and teens prioritize technology over athletics. While some have the resources and mindset to exercise and get their kids to play sports, the same cannot be said of numerous Filipinos. A few urban areas don't have parks where people can walk or exercise, even if they want to. Regular exercise doesn't necessarily mean going to the gym and lifting weights. Walking, riding a bicycle and playing sports are a major help to remain fit and healthy. One should have a balanced diet and regular exercise to prevent being obese and to have a good health.

A team from the University of Barcelona (UB) led by Dr. Juan Carlos Laguna published a study in the journal *Hepatology* that gives information to the molecular mechanism through which fructose (a type of sugar) in beverages may alter lipid energy metabolism and cause fatty liver and metabolic syndrome. Fructose-containing beverages cause hypertriglyceridemia (a condition in which triglyceride levels are elevated) and fatty liver and eventually lead to hypertension, resistance to insulin, diabetes, and obesity. Some commonly prescribed medications cause weight gain to individuals. In

this case, alternative therapy should be selected, particularly for individuals that are at risk of overweight and obesity.

Obesity can prompt numerous medical issues. It gives you a higher risk for diseases like diabetes, heart diseases, stroke and it can also lead to death. Health symptoms and signs also include difficulty in sleeping, feeling tired every day, shortness of breathing, back and joint pains and inability to cope with sudden physical activity. We should take of our health more and be aware of the lifestyle that we have. Local and international food manufacturers should innovate healthier and affordable food products, with fortified minerals, as well as lower salt, sugar and fat content. The government should likewise identify specific problem areas in which they can step in with initiatives to increase the level of physical activity.

Obesity represents a huge burden to the country, not just through higher health care costs but also through lost productivity. For instance, the EIU study found that the Philippines devotes nearly 8 percent of its healthcare spending just for obesity-related costs. What's more, obese females in the Philippines lose up to 5 years of productivity, that number balloons to 12 years among Filipino obese males—representing the highest productivity loss among the ASEAN. Together, these factors cost the Philippine economy up to a US\$1 billion a year. As Mr. Bruno Kistner, ARoFIIN Secretary, "There is no magic formula for solving the growing obesity epidemic in Asia. Governments in the region need to realize that obesity will be the number one healthcare challenge that we could face over the next two to three decades."

Overall, obesity is caused by a number of various factors. To be clear, undernutrition, especially among our children, remains a bigger health issue that the country needs to solve. But that should not mean that decisive action is not needed to get our people slim down and lead more active lives.