

## Obesity and Lifestyle

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In simple terms obesity can be defined as an unhealthy weight gain. This can be calculated using a universal measure known as body mass index (BMI); BMI is determined by dividing the weight in kilograms by squared height (kg/m<sup>2</sup>). Any individual with a BMI of 30 or above is considered obese. Both, children and adults are victims of obesity. According to WHO, nearly 600 million people were found obese in the year 2014; the number of individuals suffering from obesity doubles each year [1]. The severity of obesity in the recent years leaves us with many questions: what are the factors contributing towards obesity, what are consequences of obesity, and is obesity preventable. Answers to such questions will have a significant impact on the society, which is at high risk of suffering obesity in the present and future.

Obesogenic environment, which is a collection of metabolic, behavioral, and environmental factors substantially influences obesity [2]. Intake of food dictates the metabolic profile, which subsequently influences the body weight. A well balanced diet with quality protein, healthy fats, and carbohydrates provide quality calories. However, a diet enriched with high fat and starch can lead to obese conditions [2,3]. Besides, behavioral factors also play an important role in obesity. Eating behavior coupled with adequate physical activity determines a healthy body weight [2,4]. Every bite of food carries calories, which can be stored and eventually contribute towards body weight. An intake of calorie rich diet for a prolonged period could be a threat to a healthy environment. In addition, an imbalance between food intake and energy expenditure can be a driving factor to obesity. Therefore, a well-balanced nutritious diet coupled with adequate regular physical activity can reduce the risk of obesity.

Apart from metabolic and behavioral factors, environment vastly contributes to obesity. The recent advancements in the food industry has paved way for an unacceptable weight gain, in both, children and adults. Individuals are intrigued by the fast food stores, which are abundant at school and office premises [5]. Fast foods are not only quick meals, but also a quick and fast way for an unacceptable weight gain. Fast foods are highly processed foods, which lack a balanced nutrient composition. Nevertheless, the socio-economic status motivates individuals to choose fast food compared to homemade healthy foods. The taste, texture, and the advertisements of fast food and the convenient stores are driving the society into an unhealthier and an unacceptable environment, which can lead to a disease dense society.

Obesity can be considered as a health burden in the society. Obesity can subsequently lead to non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease and hyperglycemia [3]. Furthermore, obesity is a stigma in the society. Obese individuals are discriminated at work places and educational institutions [5,6]. Thus, obesity has both mental and physical challenges. Considering the seriousness and the rampant growth of obesity, every individual who has a fear of being obese or getting obese has a question if obesity is preventable. Clearly, obesity is a preventable condition. Food choices, eating habits, and adequate physical activity together can minimize the risk of obesity. Furthermore, the “my plate” concept [7] introduced by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) can be combined with regular physical activity for a healthy living and eventually a healthy society.

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