

### What You Can Learn From This Handout...

- ▶ How overweight and obesity and type 2 diabetes are linked
- ▶ Causes and health risks of overweight and obesity
- ▶ What to do if you are concerned about your weight

#### I always hear that type 2 diabetes and overweight are linked. Why?

Some people think type 2 diabetes is caused by eating sugar but that is not true. Your risk of type 2 diabetes is higher when someone in your family has diabetes. If you are overweight or obese and inactive, you also raise your risk of getting type 2 diabetes.

After a meal, food is broken down into *glucose* and carried in the blood to feed the body's cells. *Insulin*, which is made by your body's pancreas, moves glucose from your blood into your cells where the glucose is used for energy. When you are overweight, your body resists your own insulin so glucose cannot get into your cells. At first your pancreas tries to make more insulin but over time it makes less and less insulin. Insulin resistance increases the risk for getting type 2 diabetes. Here is the good news: losing a small amount of weight, even 10 pounds, can make a difference.

#### Is everyone with type 2 diabetes overweight?

No. Although people who are overweight are more likely to have type 2 diabetes, not everyone with type 2 diabetes is overweight.

#### How does a healthcare provider decide if you are overweight or obese?

*Body mass index*, or BMI, is one type of measurement that helps to show whether a person is overweight or obese. BMI is a formula based on a measured height without shoes and a measured weight. As BMI goes up, so does risk for medical conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes. BMI is helpful but not perfect. It does not apply to athletes or Asian/South Asian people.

BMI	
Underweight	Below 18.5
Normal	18.5 to 24.9
Overweight	25.0 to 29.9
Obesity	30.0 and above

#### How do people become overweight or obese?

Overweight and obesity can be caused by:

- ▶ Not exercising
- ▶ Eating too many calories
- ▶ Drinking large amounts of alcohol
- ▶ Having an underactive thyroid
- ▶ Taking certain medications, for example antidepressants, antipsychotics, and birth control pills
- ▶ Stress or anxiety

#### Are overweight and obesity linked with any other medical conditions?

Being obese puts added stress on the body's joints and tissues, and can make it difficult for a person to be active. Besides type 2 diabetes, obesity is linked with medical conditions including:

- ▶ High blood pressure
- ▶ Heart disease
- ▶ High cholesterol levels
- ▶ Stroke
- ▶ Certain types of cancer
- ▶ Osteoarthritis

#### I am concerned about my weight. What can I do?

- ▶ Take a moment to think about what is really important to you and how weight loss will help you. Examples of what may be important to you include your health, your grandchildren, or living to be healthy and active in retirement.
- ▶ Keep a food record for one week. This will help you to really see your usual eating patterns and food choices.
- ▶ See a registered dietitian. Information about food choices can be confusing, and a registered dietitian can guide you with respect to your culture and lifestyle.
- ▶ Try using the divided plastic plates used at picnics to begin limiting your food portions.
- ▶ Be active throughout the day.

**REFERENCES** National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse. Insulin resistance and prediabetes. Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/caxmpbb>. • NHLBI. Assessing your weight and health risk. Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/bxl2z>. • Obesity Action Coalition. Understanding excess weight and type 2 diabetes: a brochure for individuals diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/cfc8ysf>. • PubMed Health. Obesity. Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/6cpgkqny>. All websites accessed February 20, 2013.

Your healthcare provider will talk with you about steps you can take if you are concerned about your weight. Use this space to write down his or her recommendations.

My BMI: \_\_\_\_\_

Action steps: \_\_\_\_\_

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Visit these websites for information about obesity and type 2 diabetes:

- ▶ Obesity Action Coalition  
<http://www.obesityaction.org/>
- ▶ National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute: Aim for a Healthy Weight  
<http://tinyurl.com/bbz6c>
- ▶ American Diabetes Association  
<http://www.diabetes.org/>



FOR MORE INFORMATION  
TALK TO YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER  
OR VISIT [WWW.NDEI.ORG](http://WWW.NDEI.ORG)