

# Chronic Disease

Chronic disease is defined as - a disease or condition, that usually lasts for 3 months or longer and may get worse overtime. Chronic diseases tend to occur in older adults and can usually be controlled but not cured. The most common types of chronic disease are heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and arthritis.

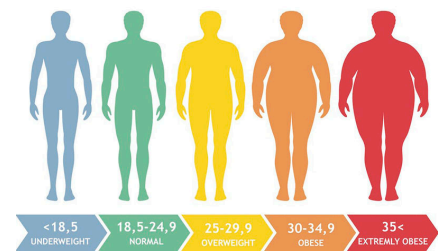


Obesity increases the risk of chronic and potentially lethal diseases.

Generally speaking, the more body fat you are carrying, the higher your health risk. However, the amount of weight gained throughout your adult years also contributes to the risk. For example, a middle-aged person who weighs 10 kg more than they did in their early twenties has an increased risk of high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes, and coronary heart disease.

Some of the many chronic conditions and diseases associated with obesity include:

- insulin resistance
- high blood pressure
- atherosclerosis
- cardiovascular disease
- stroke
- some cancers including breast, endometrial and colon
- type 2 diabetes (non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus)
- gall bladder disease
- polycystic ovarian syndrome
- musculoskeletal problems such as osteoarthritis and back pain
- gout
- cataracts
- stress incontinence
- sleep apnoea



The causes of obesity.

A range of factors can cause obesity. Factors in childhood and adolescence are particularly influential. A high proportion of obese children and adolescents grow up to be obese adults.

Factors known to increase the risk of obesity include:

- **eating more kilojoules than needed** – kilojoules from overeating food could lead to an accumulation of body fat if it is not physically used. There is a need to learn and understand how the body balancing energy in and energy out, and healthy eating.

- **modern living** – most modern conveniences, such as cars, computers, televisions, and home appliances, reduce the need to be physically active.
- **sitting** – studies have shown that even people who are physically active but spend large amounts of time sitting down (for example, watching TV, working at a computer, or driving) have a higher risk of obesity than people who do not sit for long periods of time.
- **socioeconomic factors** – poorer education and lower incomes may be more likely to be overweight or obese.
- **changes in the food supply** – energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods and drinks are readily available, intensely marketed, and affordable. Serve sizes of these foods and drinks have also increased.
- **inactivity** – for most of us, physical activity is no longer a natural part of our daily schedule (for example, we drive instead of walk). Obese people tend to live sedentary lifestyles.
- **genes** – researchers have found that genetics play a small part in regulating body weight. Parental overweight or obesity is associated with increased risk of child overweight or obesity.

An interesting fact as a person puts on more weight the body makes more blood vessels which places stress on the heart. Weight gain especially in large amounts is not good for heart health.



It is important to eat well throughout your life. This means eating a wide variety from the food groups – wholemeal bread & cereals, fruit, vegetables, low fat dairy foods, lean meats, and good sources of fat. You need to reduce saturated fats, sugar, salt but increase the fibre.

