Obesity

Learn how to prevent, identify, and manage obesity

DC | HEALTH
GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

What is Obesity?

- Obesity is a disease that involves having too much body weight
  - » **Body Mass Index** is often used by health care providers to diagnose obesity when someone has a Body Mass Index* of 30.0 or higher.
  - » ***Body Mass Index** is the ratio of a person's weight to height that gives a general measure of a person's weight status. However, BMI on its own should not be used to determine if a person's weight is healthy.
- Many health care providers also measure around a person's waist to help guide treatment decisions.

What Causes Obesity?

Many factors can play a role in a person's risk for weight gain and obesity.

- **Healthy Behaviors:** Not getting enough sleep, eating highly processed food or added sugars, lack of physical activity, and too much screen time can lead to weight gain and obesity.
- **Medications:** Psychiatric medications, steroids, anti-seizure or mood stabilizer drugs, and some blood pressure and diabetes medications can lead to weight gain and obesity.
- **Genetics:** Family history of obesity can put someone at higher risk for developing obesity.
- **Health Conditions:** Cushing syndrome, polycystic ovary syndrome, or an underactive thyroid may lead to weight gain and obesity.
- **Stress:** Long-term stress can make you more likely to crave and eat high-fat, high sugar food (comfort food) that can lead to weight gain and obesity.
- **Environments:** Living in a neighborhood with less access to healthy foods or safe places for physical activity may put a person at a higher risk for developing obesity.

# Nourish your body, mind, and soul.

Obesity

Risk calculator if available:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers a free Adult BMI calculator that can help you determine your risk for obesity: cdc.gov/bmi/adult-calculator/index.html

How Can Obesity Be Managed or Treated?

- **Eat a Healthy Diet:** Regularly eat different types of healthy foods including fruits, vegetables, protein, and grains will support a healthy diet, which is essential to having a healthy weight.
- **Stay Physically Active:** Get more physical activity or exercise. Adults need at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week.
- **Get Enough Sleep:** Make sure you get enough sleep each night.
- **Reduce Stress:** Learn to recognize stress and develop stress management and relaxation skills, like mindfulness techniques such as meditation and reducing screen time.
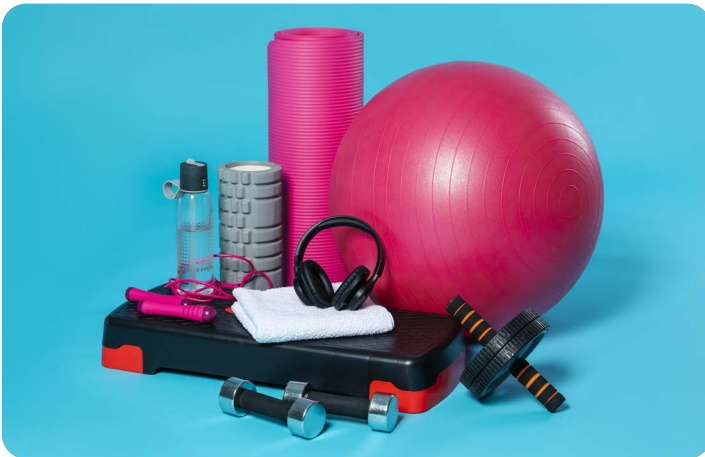
Resources

For tips and resources to help you build and maintain healthy habits, you can visit:

» **LivingWell DC:** Visit **livingwell.dc.gov/page/go-go-dc** for tools to help you eat healthy, exercise, get healthy sleep go to the doctor, and quit smoking.

» **Build Healthy Habits:** DC SNAP-Ed offers free nutrition and physical activity classes. To find a class, visit the Event Calendar on at **livingwell.dc.gov/events** or email **info.snap-ed@dc.gov**.

» **DPR:** Find activities and programs for any fitness level at the DC Department of Parks and Recreation **dprprograms.splashthat.com/**

» **Healthy Eating:** USDA offers healthy eating tips and information, including budget-friendly healthy recipes: **myplate.gov/**

Sources:
- cdc.gov/obesity/risk-factors/risk-factors.html
- cdc.gov/healthy-weight-growth/about/tips-for-balancing-food-activity.html
- myplate.gov/eat-healthy/what-is-myplate