

Overweight or Obesity

As you know you are overweight and losing weight would be of considerable benefit to your general health, as well as helping to improve a large number of other specific medical conditions.

There are only 2 treatable hormonal causes of being overweight, and we have carefully made sure that you do not have either of these, (that is we have shown that your thyroid is normal, and that you are not making too much of the body's natural steroid hormones). You therefore have what is known as *Simple Obesity or Overweight*.

A few patients with simple obesity obviously eat a very huge amount of food so that everyone can see why they are overweight. Most obese people, however, do not eat a great deal more than other people, and may indeed eat less than some thin people. Many doctors and scientists have tried over the years to find out why some people find it so easy to gain weight, but no treatable cause has ever been found, although we all recognised that some people seem to have 'more efficient' bodies than others. *What is certainly true, however, is that the body only creates excessive fat stores when it has more energy available from*

the food being eaten than is being 'burnt up' by the person's activities. Even a tiny excess of energy (calories) every day will result in major weight gain if continued regularly for years.

This means that you can only have gained weight by eating more than your particular body needed, and will only be able to lose weight by eating less than your body needs - which must mean less than you are eating now. There is no other 'magic' solution. In particular there are no tablets or other medical treatments which have been proven to be safe in the long term.

Exercise is also an important part of any plan to lose weight - regular exercise ensures that your body will burn up more energy, will make you feel more 'healthy', and improve your general health even if your weight doesn't fall very much.

Diet

A diet is the most important part of losing weight. If necessary we will be happy to arrange for you to see our dietician, and you may also find it helpful to join a group of people with similar problems, such as *'Weight- Watchers'*, who can encourage you to stick to the diet. However, if you are overweight and being advised that you are eating the correct amount (or even too little) then it means that the advice is faulty - not that there is something else wrong!

This information leaflet is not meant to replace whatever diet sheet you are using, but do remember the following points:

- A diet is not something you take for a short time and then stop. If you go back to eating what you used to eat before then you will go back to weighing exactly what you started off weighing. To stay at a healthy low weight you need to alter the pattern of what you eat *forever*. Therefore, choose a healthy mixed diet rather than some unusual 'fad' diet which you can't keep on eating forever.
- Avoid things which everyone knows are fattening. This means anything containing sugar, glucose, or a large amount of fat or oil (including margarine, chips, crisps, pastries, biscuits, sweets etc).
- Avoid snacks between meals - and try not to miss meals, you will just eat more later.
- Try to eat only 'healthier' foods: fresh vegetables (a plain boiled or steamed vegetable is no more fattening than a salad vegetable), wholemeal and wholegrain products rather than refined 'white' products, more fish and chicken, only lean red meat.
- Avoid fried foods completely: grill, bake or microwave instead.

- If you are not losing weight then, even if you think you are sticking closely to the diet, this must mean that you are still eating more than *your* body needs. The only answer then must be to eat less *however little that may seem*.
- If you think you are sticking to a diet which contains 750 Calories or less a day, and are still not losing weight, then this means that you must, in fact, be eating more than you think. When patients are given a diet as strict as this under closely controlled conditions then **everyone** loses weight (because you need this much energy just to breathe and carry out normal activities). However, many scientific studies have shown that people who are overweight very frequently underestimate what they are eating, or fail to report what they eat to the dietician, or often fail to remember themselves even a short time later. If you are in this situation, try to keep a close record in a book of every scrap of food you eat so that you can double check your intake.
- *Remember you cannot hope to lose more than 1-2 pounds (½1kg) of fat a week and keep it off in the long term. If you are very overweight this means it may take many months or years to reach your ideal weight, but once you are there it will be worth it!*

Exercise

- Exercise is good for you, will improve your general health, and may actually make you feel less hungry and increase your metabolic rate. However, it needs to be combined with an effective diet since a great deal of exercise is needed to lose just one pound of fat.
- Start off with gentle exercise such as walking or swimming, and build up to more vigorous exercise as you feel fitter.
- Join a club or gym if you can - it makes it easier to keep on exercising. If you stop exercising you will probably gain the weight again!
- Finally, it seems to be everyone's experience that for every year we get older, we either have to eat less or exercise more and probably both if we want to stay the same weight. I certainly find this - and you probably do to.

Calculate your ideal weight for your height..

Your Height		Lowest Ideal Weight			Highest Ideal Weight			You have Obesity if you are over..			Dangerous Obesity if you are over..		
		BMI 19			BMI 25			BMI 30			BMI 40		
Feet	Metres	Kg	Stone	lb	Kg	Stone	lb	Kg	Stone	lb	Kg	Stone	lb
5ft 0in	1.52	44	6	13	58	9	1	69	10	12	92	14	7
5ft 2in	1.57	47	7	5	62	9	10	74	11	9	99	15	7
5ft 4in	1.62	50	7	12	66	10	4	79	12	5	105	16	7
5ft 6in	1.68	54	8	6	71	11	1	85	13	4	113	17	10
5ft 8in	1.73	57	8	13	75	11	11	90	14	2	120	18	11
5ft 10in	1.78	60	9	6	79	12	6	95	14	13	127	19	13
6ft 0in	1.83	64	9	14	84	13	2	100	15	11	134	21	1
6ft 2in	1.88	67	10	8	88	13	12	106	16	9	141	22	3

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