

# FAST FACTS



*Obesity is associated with significantly increased risk of more than 20 chronic diseases and health conditions that cause devastating consequences and increased mortality. Beyond the significant personal toll of obesity, related health complications are driving up health care costs and threatening employers' bottom lines. This updated series of fact sheets provides information on this complicated disease. Download them all at [go.gwu.edu/obesityfacts](http://go.gwu.edu/obesityfacts).*

## Obesity and COVID-19

Severe obesity is a risk factor for complications and hospitalization from COVID-19, especially in younger patients. Many diseases that are commonly comorbid with obesity are also risk factors for COVID-19.

## Causes of Obesity

Obesity is a complex disease influenced by behavioral, economic, environmental, and genetic factors. The modern environment makes obesity more likely—foods high in calories are cheap and prevalent and opportunities for physical activity are decreasing.

## Obesity-Related Chronic Diseases

Obesity is the leading risk factor for type-2 diabetes and osteoarthritis, a major risk factor for heart disease and hypertension, and is causally linked to 13 different cancers.

## Costs of Obesity

Obesity is associated with increased medical expenditures and indirect costs from lost productivity, absenteeism, and disability claims.

## Obesity in the Workplace

Obesity can be costly to both employers and employees. Employers wishing to decrease obesity-related costs should consider systematic approaches to workplace wellness.

## Health Care Providers and Obesity

Effective obesity treatment involves collaboration, shared decision-making, and communication between providers and patients.

## Obesity Care Coverage

Coverage for obesity care is inconsistent across states and health insurance plans and few provide coverage for comprehensive obesity care.

## Weight Bias & Stigma

Weight bias and stigma are exceedingly prevalent in our society, impairing the successful treatment of obesity.

## Obesity in Early Life

Pediatric obesity has risen over the past few decades, putting children at risk of serious illness. Children and adolescents deserve access to safe and effective obesity treatments.

## Benefits of Weight Loss

A 5-10% weight loss through lifestyle intervention, drug therapy, and/or bariatric surgery improves health, quality of life, and financial wellbeing among persons with obesity.

## Trends in Obesity Prevalence

Obesity rates differ by geographic location, age, sex, and race, but have been steadily increasing in the U.S. and throughout the world.

