

## Obesity

Obesity is a condition caused by the accumulation of excessive body fat brought about by an imbalance between caloric intake (number of calories eaten) and energy expenditure (number of calories burned) occurring over an extended period of time. Sedentary lifestyles and surplus caloric intake are considered to be primarily responsible for the dramatic worldwide increase in obesity during the past 2 decades.

Adults and children can be classified as normal, overweight, or obese by calculating their body mass index (BMI), based on their height and weight. For example, adults are considered overweight if their BMI is 25 to 29, and obese if their BMI is 30 or higher.

Obesity affects the body in many negative ways and can lead to other health problems, such as:

- Cardiovascular disease
- Stroke
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Cancer (breast, liver, endometrial, prostate, and colon)
- Osteoarthritis
- Lymphedema (swelling of arms and legs)
- Breathing problems, including asthma and sleep apnea
- Depression

## HOW A PHYSICAL THERAPIST CAN HELP

Physical therapists can help people who are obese to be more physically active and fit by teaching them to exercise in pain free and fun ways, and are trained to create safe, effective physical activity programs for people of all ages and abilities. Your physical therapist will work with you to design a specific treatment program to address your needs, including exercises you can do at home. Your physical therapist can help you:

- Reduce pain
- Improve cardiovascular fitness
- Improve strength
- Improve movement
- Improve flexibility and posture
- Increase activity levels



Nearly  
**100 million**  
Americans are **obese**  
or **overweight.**

**325,000**  
**deaths** in the United  
States each year are  
attributed to obesity.