Nutrition and Weight Gain

Nutrition

It is important for people with disabilities to get proper nutrition. Some of the conditions that cause paralysis can also cause swallowing difficulties. Food may need to be pureed or made soft in those instances. While there are many fitness opportunities available to wheelchair users and people with paralysis, it may still be more difficult for people with mobility issues to maintain proper weight by exercising. People with mobility issues may also need specially adapted eating utensils.

What Are Overweight and Obesity?
The terms "overweight" and "obesity" refer to a person's overall body weight and whether it's too high. Overweight is having extra body weight from muscle, bone, fat, and/or water. Obesity is having a high amount of extra body fat.

The most useful measure of overweight and obesity is body mass index (BMI). BMI is based on height and weight and is used for adults, children, and teens. For more information about BMI, see "Calculate Your Body Mass Index" at https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/BMI/bmicalc.htm.

Overview

Millions of Americans and people worldwide are overweight or obese. Being overweight or obese puts you at risk for many diseases and conditions. The more body fat that you have and the more you weigh, the more likely you are to develop:

- Coronary heart disease (also called coronary artery disease)
- High blood pressure
- Type 2 diabetes
- Gallstones
- Breathing problems
- Certain cancers

Your weight is the result of many factors. These factors include environment, family history and genetics, metabolism (the way your body changes food and oxygen into energy), behavior or habits, and more. You can't change some factors, such as family history. However, you can change other factors, such as your lifestyle habits.

You can take steps to prevent or treat overweight or obesity. Follow a healthy eating plan and keep your calorie needs in mind. Do physical activity regularly and try to limit the amount of time that you're inactive.

Weight-loss medicines and surgery also are options for some people who need to lose weight if lifestyle changes aren't enough.

Outlook

Reaching and staying at a healthy weight is a long-term challenge for people who are overweight or obese. But it also can be a chance to lower your risk of other serious health problems. With the right treatment and motivation, it's possible to lose weight and lower your long-term disease risk.

Source: National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute
http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/obe/
Websites

Sites with general information on nutrition and weight management

**American Heart Association (AHA)**
https://www.heart.org

*American Heart Association: The Skinny on Fats*
https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/cholesterol/prevention-and-treatment-of-high-cholesterol-hyperlipidemia/the-skinny-on-fats#.VqkYqIUrIdU
This page has information on various kinds of fats.

*American Heart Association: Facts on Fats*
This page lists recommendations regarding the use of fats.

**Health Canada - Santé Canada: Canada’s Food Guide**
This site has information and tools to help people maintain healthy eating and activity habits.

This document provides information and advice to help people choose a healthy eating pattern to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

**Kids Health: Figuring Out Food Labels**
http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/stay_healthy/food/labels.html
This page has audio and text to help children understand food labels.

**Linus Pauling Institute: Micronutrient Information Center – Glycemic Index and Glycemic Load**
http://lpi.oregonstate.edu/infocenter/foods/grains/gigl.html
This page has information on the body’s response to carbohydrates, measured through glycemic index, and disease prevention. The Micronutrient Information Center’s pages on vitamins, minerals, supplements and other nutrients are easily accessible through the index on the left.

**National Resource Center on Nutrition & Aging**
https://nutritionandaging.org/
1550 Crystal Drive, Suite 1004
Arlington, VA 22202
Phone: 703-548-5558
The National Resource Center on Nutrition and Aging (NRCNA) is hosted by Meals on Wheels America as part of a cooperative agreement with the Administration for
Community Living. They provide resources to consumers (current and future older adult populations) and nutrition training and technical assistance to the aging network.

**U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agricultural Library: Food and Nutrition Information Center**
[https://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic](https://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic)

*Food and Nutrition Information Center: Weight and Obesity*  
This page has information and resources on a variety of topics related to weight and obesity, including treatment and prevention guidelines and practical advice for weight control.

**U.S. Department of Agriculture: MyPlate**  
[http://www.choosemyplate.gov/](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/)

This site has information on healthy eating, weight management and physical activity. MyPlate replaced the food pyramid in June 2011.

**Craig Hospital: Diet Resources**  
[https://craighospital.org/resources/topics/diet](https://craighospital.org/resources/topics/diet)

**U.S. Food and Drug Administration**  
[http://www.fda.gov/](http://www.fda.gov/)

*U.S. Food and Drug Administration: How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Fact Labels*  

*U.S. Food and Drug Administration: Dietary Supplements*  
[http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm153239.htm](http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm153239.htm)

**Sites with information specific to people with disabilities and/or spinal cord injury**

**American Dietetic Association Evidence-Based Library: Spinal Cord Injury Guidelines**  
The guidelines will help clinicians determine the nutrition needs of their patients with SCI.

**CDC: Disability and Obesity**  
This page has information on overweight and obesity, including recommendations for healthy eating and physical activity.

**CDC: Overweight and Obesity Among People with Disabilities Factsheet**  
CDC: Tip Sheet on Obesity in People with Disabilities by State
“Obesity and People with Disabilities: A Tip Sheet for Public Health Professionals”

Craig Hospital: Diet
https://craighospital.org/resources/topics/diet
Craig specializes in the treatment of people with spinal cord injury and brain injury.

Mealtime Partners
http://www.mealt imepartners.com
1137 S.E. Parkway
Azle, TX 76020
Phone: 817-237-9991, 800-996-8607
E-mail: info@mealt imepartners.com
Mealtime Partners makes products that facilitate independent eating and drinking for people with disabilities who cannot independently feed themselves.

National Center for Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD)
http://www.nchpad.org/
400 Ridgeway Dr.
Birmingham, AL 35209
Phone: 800-900-8086
NCHPAD is positioned to effect change in health promotion/obesity management among people with disabilities through its history of providing advocacy, services and programs to numerous organizations and people throughout the country on the topics of health and physical activity in people with disabilities.

NCHPAD: Children with Disabilities and Obesity
http://www.nchpad.org/1143/5653/Obesity~~Cardiovascular~Disease~in~Children~with~and~without~Disabilities~~and~Prevention
This fact sheet discusses the risks of obesity and the benefits of physical activity.

NCHPAD: Nutrition
http://www.nchpad.org/Individuals~Caregivers
This page lists many articles on nutrition for people with disabilities.

e-Health Dietary Points Calculator and Meal Planner For People with Spinal Cord Injury
http://www.nchpad.org/sci/
is made possible by a collaboration between the National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability and the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation.

Spinal Cord Injury Information Network (SCIIN)
http://www.spinalcord.uab.edu/

SCIIN: Nutrition
http://www.uab.edu/ medicine/sci/daily-living/nutrition
This page lists pamphlets, articles and presentations related to nutrition and people with spinal cord injuries.

**SCIIN: EatRight Weight Management Program**
http://www.uab.edu/medicine/sci/uab-scims-information/eatright-weight-management-program

This 12-week weight management program was designed for individuals with spinal cord impairments, which includes persons with spinal cord injury, dysfunction and disease. The program includes a workbook and video which participants can follow each week.

**Northwest Regional Spinal Cord Injury System (NRSCIS)**
http://sci.washington.edu/

**NRSCIS: Everyday Nutrition for Individuals with Spinal Cord Injury**
This report by Harborview Medical Center dietitian Vickeri Barton and occupational therapy clinical specialist Susie Kim was given on April 12, 2011. The presentation can be read online or viewed as a streaming video.

**Streaming Videos**

**Shepherd Center: Empowering Women with Spinal Cord Injury –Diet and Exercise**
https://www.shepherd.org/more/resources-patients/women-sci-resource-videos

**University of Kansas: Diet Project for People with Physical Disabilities**
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nF2CVMiI8Rs&list=UU97Dz3Cj74N7lqTquQtuPQ&index=1&feature=plcp (7 minutes)

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