Obesity

Chronic Care
for Aboriginal People

What is obesity?

Obesity occurs when you take in more calories than you burn through exercise and normal daily activities. Your body stores these excess calories as fat.

What causes obesity?

Although there are genetic, behavioural and hormonal influences on body weight, obesity can sometimes be traced to a medical cause and other conditions. However, these disorders are rare and, in general, the principal causes of obesity are:

> **Inactivity.** If you're not very active, you don't burn as many calories.

> **Unhealthy diet and eating habits.** Weight gain is inevitable if you regularly eat more calories than you burn especially diets that are high in calories like fast food and soft drinks.

What are the risk factors?

Obesity usually results from a combination of causes and contributing factors, including:

> Genetics/inherited through your family

> Lack or not enough exercise

> Unhealthy diet

> Medical problems

> Certain medications

> Social and economic

> Age

> Pregnancy

> A waist measurement greater than 90cm for men and greater than 80cm for women

Even if you have one or more of these risk factors, it doesn't mean that you're destined to become obese. You can reduce most risk factors through diet, physical activity and exercise, and behaviour changes.

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What are the symptoms?

Obesity is diagnosed when your body mass index (BMI) is 30 or higher. Your body mass index is calculated by dividing your weight in kilograms (kg) by your height in meters (m) squared. See BMI Calculator: http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/healthy-eating/Pages/bmi-calculator.aspx

BMI	Weight status
Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5-24.9	Normal
25.0-29.9	Overweight
30.0-34.9	Obese (Class I)
35.0-39.9	Obese (Class II)
40.0 and higher	Extreme obesity (Class III)

For more information

Contact your local Aboriginal Medical Service or Health worker. Aboriginal Chronic Care workers are located in NSW Health Services and some Aboriginal Medical Services.

PDF's can be downloaded and printed from Chronic Care for Aboriginal People Program: www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/networks/ccap

Email: ACI-CCAP@health.nsw.gov.au

How can I reduce my risk of being obese?

Try and maintain a healthy weight range by;

- Choose smaller portions and fewer kilojoules
- Eat more fruit and vegetables
- Make water your drink
- Be active every day
- Sit less and move more
- Avoid takeaways or convenience foods
- Discuss options with your doctor, Dietitian or health worker

Facts

- The burden of ill health among Aboriginal people is much greater than in the general population particularly with regard to nutrition-related chronic diseases.
- Obesity is one of the risk factors for the main causes of morbidity and mortality in Aboriginal populations - Type 2 Diabetes, cardiovascular disease and renal disease.

Free services

Get Healthy Service
www.gethealthynsw.com.au
or call 1300 806 258

NSW Health Make Healthy Normal
www.makehealthynormal.nsw.gov.au

ACI NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation