

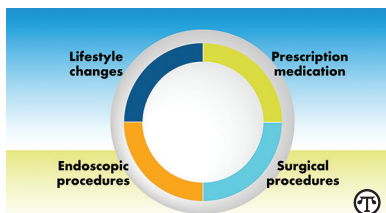
Beyond the Scale: Learn the Facts About Obesity

by the American Gastroenterological Association

(NAPS)—Obesity is a life-long health problem that affects more than 42% of American adults. Most people don't know that obesity is a disease and impacts some ethnic and racial groups more than others, including 47% of Hispanic American adults. Recent news stories around new anti-obesity medications have created many questions about obesity and its treatments.

Here are some important facts to know about obesity:

- **Obesity does not happen from poor lifestyle choices.** Lack of willpower is often blamed as the main cause for weight gain. However, research has shown that obesity is a complex disease with many factors causing weight gain. It also affects many parts of the body and can increase your risk of developing serious health conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer and liver disease.
- **Losing weight can reverse certain health conditions caused by obesity.** Losing weight can have a positive impact on your overall health. Even a small amount of weight loss can ease joint pain, lower your chances of cancer and lower your blood pressure. It can also help improve certain digestive issues caused by obesity, like acid reflux or GERD (gastroesophageal reflux disease). Weight loss can also lessen harmful fat in your liver, and the swelling and scarring that happens with liver disease.
- **Many doctors can provide obesity treatments that will help.** Because obesity impacts many body systems, different types of doctors can help with prevention and treatment. Gastroenterologists, for example, can help patients with obesity-related digestive



Obesity is a chronic disease that affects some ethnic and racial groups more than others but anyone can take steps to combat it.

health issues, such as reflux or liver disease, that can be treated or prevented through weight management.

- **There are many helpful ways patients can try to manage their weight.** Your health care provider can help you decide which treatments are best for you, such as lifestyle changes, prescription drugs, endoscopic procedures and/or surgery.

“As a gastroenterologist, patients often come to my office for serious health issues such as liver disease, which they don't realize is caused by obesity and can be prevented or reversed by staying at a healthy weight,” said Dr. Andres Acosta, an obesity doctor and gastroenterologist at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. “This is very important for Hispanic American adults who have more obesity and liver disease than other ethnicities. Keeping up a healthy weight is an important way to improve obesity-related health issues and prevent or reverse certain conditions before they become severe.”

For more information on obesity, how it affects your overall health, and available treatment options and how to access them, visit the American Gastroenterological Association's Obesity Resource Center at <https://patient.gastro.org/obesity/>.