

Module 2, Lesson 4 Handout:
Diseases Related to Obesity

Obesity is an epidemic that stresses every system in the body. Besides the discomfort of having to carry around extra weight all the time, making it uncomfortable to sit, walk, lie down - and in some cases even breathe - being obese causes emotional distress from stereotyping to shaming, which only proliferates the problem. We know it isn't easy to lose weight. The hard work it takes to prevent and reverse obesity is essential, critical and life-saving. Obesity is linked to all of the following medical conditions. It's important to understand the risks so that you can help your clients to minimize them.

Why Does Obesity Lead to Disease?

Before we dig into the conditions, let's briefly discuss why obesity is such a big risk for health. Both subcutaneous and abdominal adipose tissue (aka the visible fat just under the skin and the deep fat that surrounds the organs) in obesity has been found to be active tissue. This tissue is actively involved in the regulation of physiological and pathological processes, including immunity and inflammation. Adipose tissue produces and releases a variety of hormones as well as pro-inflammatory cytokines. Obesity is thus an underlying condition for inflammatory and metabolic diseases. Diet or dietary patterns play critical roles in obesity and other pathophysiological conditions. Okay, here are the diseases being obese can put your clients at risk for.

Obesity Related Cancers

- Breast cancer, especially after menopause
- Colon and rectum cancers
- Endometrium (lining of the uterus) cancer
- Gallbladder cancer
- Kidney cancers
- It's likely more cancers are related to obesity, and research is ongoing

Cardiac Related Diseases

- Heart attack
- Heart failure
- Stroke

- High blood pressure
- Sudden cardiac death
- Angina (chest pain)
- Abnormal heart rhythm
- The heavier a person is, the harder the heart has to work. Sometimes it can't keep up with the demand and the heart adapts or compromises, which may cause these diseases

Type 2 Diabetes Almost 90% of people with DM2 are overweight or obese, which may cause:

- Heart disease
- Kidney disease
- Stroke
- Amputation
- Blindness

Fertility Problems

- Obese pregnant women experience higher rates of high blood pressure, high blood sugar and insulin resistance
- Gestational diabetes
- Preeclampsia
- C-section deliveries for the mom, with increased risks
- Premature birth
- Stillborn
- Neural tube defects for the baby

Other Diseases

- Chronic kidney disease
- Fatty liver disease
- Osteoarthritis
- Mental illness such as depression
- Sleep Apnea

As a health care practitioner, you have a major role not only in helping your clients lose weight but in improving the quality of their lives and saving lives. Be proud of your role.