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What do older people need to know about being overweight?



A healthy weight is still important for adults 65 and older

Gaining weight is common as we age. Our metabolism changes and we need to eat less. We also lose height and muscle mass. More than 1 in 3 people over 65 have obesity, which can lead to sickness, physical disability, and early death.

Ask your healthcare provider what you can do to stay as healthy as possible.

- Your healthcare provider can tell you whether you need to lose weight, change some eating habits, or be more active.
- Your waist may be measured to determine whether you are overweight. In some people, this is more accurate than determining your body mass index (BMI) as you get older.
- It helps to talk with your provider about what foods, exercises, and medications are safe for people over 65, as well as who buys your food and where you get it from.
- Your provider may suggest certain foods and exercises that are helpful. They can also tell you if any of your medicines may cause weight gain.

How can older adults lose weight safely?

- Tell your healthcare provider you want to lose weight and ask for help.
- Make an eating, exercise, and medication plan that works for you—one that you are willing to do every day.
- Safe diets include DASH and the Mediterranean diets. Look for them on the Internet or at the library.
- A dietitian can help you with what you need to eat, how much, and how often. You also may need to eat more protein.

- You may need to take vitamin D and calcium pills. Ask your pharmacist for recommendations.
- Resistance exercises and strength training help keep bones and muscles strong while someone loses weight.
- Consider seeing a physical therapist. They can help you with an exercise plan you like.

What's the benefit of making changes in eating and exercise for older adults?

- Making small changes in eating and exercise can help you have more energy and increased strength.
- These changes could also help you stay healthier, improve your ability to move, and live longer.

Are there other ways to lose weight for people over 65?

- Weight loss medicines approved by the FDA have not been extensively studied in older adults, so they cannot be universally recommended. Use particular caution for those medicines that can increase blood pressure and pulse.
- Bariatric surgery can still be an option. Talk with your healthcare provider before you consider this surgery.



Talk with your healthcare provider about maintaining a healthy weight.

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Disclosure: Authors of this Patient Page declared no conflict of interest.