

The Real Cost of Obesity on your Health



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Obesity is responsible for 9,000 premature deaths a year in England. It reduces life expectancy by, on average, 9 years. The Department of Health's Change4Life campaign also advises that after quitting smoking, keeping a healthy body weight is one of the best ways to reduce your chances of getting cancer. *

With all these home truths, why are so many people ignoring the real cost that obesity can have on their health?

Leading dietitian and Head of Weight Management Services at The Hospital Group, Cirian Marie-Beddoes, said: "One of the most prevalent health issues for the obese is diabetes. 2.5 million** people in the UK suffer from Diabetes and a great proportion of those with Type 2 could be cured if they lost their excess weight. "Obesity is recognised as the main factor in contracting Type 2 diabetes, which can lead to further complications such as foot ulceration, nephropathy, retinopathy and heart disease – all with serious risks and discomfort for the patient, but also costly to treat."

Research published by the American Journal for Medicine*** showed that following obesity surgery, 87% of type 2 diabetics either saw a complete cure or improvement.

Cirian added: "We are in a recession, but eating out has become the norm – the team



of dietitians at The Hospital Group find that obese families think nothing of popping out for all-you-can eat pizza or Chinese on a regular basis. "This is the root of the problem. People who maintain a clinically obese body weight have a habit of consuming body-builder levels of calories and of course that has to change with a restricted calorie intake. "But it's also a case of looking at what makes up a person's diet. You can consume 1,000 high-quality calories and blossom or the same number of calories in junk food and you'll be ill."

Comments regarding obese individuals and their health which stood out included the following:

- "My work suffered because I took too many days off due to illness."
- "I was always tired."
- "I was limited as to what I could do in life – for example, I could not lift anything because of my Arthritis and backache."

Key findings of the report:

- 22% of the obese people questioned suffered from back pain as a result of their weight.
- 15% of the obese people questioned suffered from heart burn or reflux as a result of their weight.
- 11% of the obese people questioned suffered from arthritis as a result of their weight.
- 9% of the obese people questioned suffered from diabetes as a result of their weight.
- Weekly spending on personal food allowance is vastly increased for the obese people questioned –(NB only 30 severely obese respondents questioned).

According to mysupermarket.co.uk, a family of four's average weekly food shop is £100 – so at £61.70 a week, the severely obese are eating enough to feed more than two people.

The Report also included a case study of John Hatchman, who turned his life around by undergoing a gastric band surgery to take control of his weight:

Rochester, 43, had a gastric band in 2008 and lost 6 stone.

"I was injecting 200 units of insulin a day because of my obesity-induced diabetes. Having lost the weight, I'm completely cured."

John explains: "I'd struggled with my weight for nearly 15 years and had severe type 2 diabetes and was insulin dependent - injecting myself five times a day with 200 units of insulin. I also suffered with sleep apnoea as a result of my obesity. I could see the harm I was doing to myself and was just fed up of being fat. "Following my surgery, I can't tell you how much better I feel, my diabetes has gone, as has my sleep apnoea - I no longer have to use a C Pap Machine to help me breathe.

"I've gone from a 40 inch waist to a 32 and XXXL shirt to a M. I can go swimming, stay awake longer, and even silly things like being able to tie my shoe laces without getting breathless. I also work as a carer in a children's home, so being able to move about is crucial. My obesity surgery has given me my health, and my life, back."

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2056 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 5th-7th October 2009. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

OnePoll questioned 4000 adults between 19-21 October 2009. The survey was carried out online and the panel used was aged 16+ and nationally representative.

*Change4Life campaign
**Diabetes UK
***<http://www.privatehealth.co.uk/news/march-2009/obesity-surgery-may-resolve-diabetes-30321/>

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