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Health Conditions Associated with Obesity

Obesity is a metabolic disease. Being overweight is not just a matter of vanity or esthetics (how I look), it is a serious health condition that compromises quality of life, shortens healthspan, and shortens lifespan. It is a major risk factor for a wide range of common illnesses and health conditions. It doesn't just affect appearance—it influences nearly every system in the body.

1. Cardiovascular Diseases

Excess body fat—especially around the abdomen—increases strain on the heart and blood vessels.

- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Coronary artery disease
- Heart attack
- Heart failure
- Stroke
- Atrial fibrillation (irregular heartbeat)
- Peripheral artery disease

2. Metabolic Disorders

Obesity strongly affects how the body regulates glucose and lipids.

- Type 2 diabetes (one of the strongest links)
- Insulin resistance / metabolic syndrome
- Dyslipidemia (high LDL, high triglycerides, low HDL)
- Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD)
- Can progress to nonalcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH) and cirrhosis

3. Respiratory Conditions

Excess weight restricts lung expansion and affects airway regulation.

- Obstructive sleep apnea
- Asthma
- Obesity hypoventilation syndrome
- Increased risk of respiratory infections

4. Musculoskeletal Disorders

Extra weight increases mechanical stress on joints and bones.

- Osteoarthritis (especially knees, hips)
- Chronic lower back pain
- Gout
- Degenerative disc disease

5. Gastrointestinal and Hepatic Conditions

Obesity alters digestive function and increases inflammation.

- Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
- Gallstones
- Hiatal hernia

6. Hormonal and Reproductive Disorders

Both men and women experience endocrine impacts.

Women

- Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS)
- Infertility
- Pregnancy complications (gestational diabetes, preeclampsia)

Men

- Low testosterone
- Low sperm quality
- Erectile dysfunction

7. Cancers

Obesity is recognized as a risk factor for multiple cancers.

- Breast cancer (postmenopausal)
- Colorectal cancer
- Endometrial cancer

- Esophageal adenocarcinoma
- Kidney cancer
- Pancreatic cancer
- Liver cancer
- Prostate cancer (potential increased risk/progression)

8. Mental Health and Neurologic Conditions

Obesity contributes to both biological and psychological burdens.

- Depression
- Anxiety disorders
- Cognitive decline / dementia (growing evidence)

9. Dermatologic Conditions

Skin folds and inflammation increase susceptibility.

- Intertrigo
- Fungal infections
- Acanthosis nigricans (sign of insulin resistance)
- Lymphedema

10. Immunologic and Inflammatory Effects

Obesity creates a chronic low-grade inflammatory state.

- Higher risk of severe infections
- Worse outcomes with influenza and COVID-19
- Autoimmune disease risk (emerging research)