

# CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19) BEING OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE



**COVID-19 has created a perfect storm for people who struggle with weight and even for those who didn't in the past.** It's easy to see how weight gain during the pandemic increased. **Boredom, anxiety, and stress eating have surged.** There has been less physical activity for many people. Comfort food recipes have been trending on Google. There is so much baking going on, supermarkets couldn't keep baking supplies and mixes in stock. You find yourself thinking that a cookie sounds good—or a beer. Now people are becoming concerned about "**Quarantine 15**" (referring to new pounds gained).

Being overweight/obese is turning out to be one of the key indicators that a person will have a particularly bad run-in with COVID-19. One study found people with body mass indexes over 30 are at much greater risk for hospitalization, intensive care, and death. Another showed that people under age 60 are 2-3 times more likely to be admitted to the hospital for COVID-19 if they are overweight or have obesity.

More than one-third of adults in the U.S. are obese. 36.5% of adults have obesity. Another 32.5 % of American adults are overweight. In all, more than two-thirds of adults in the United States are overweight or have obesity. People who are overweight have a BMI of 25 to 29, people who have obesity have a BMI of 30 or greater. We have a weight/obesity epidemic in the midst of a pandemic.



Many factors can influence a patient's outcome: **Fat can physically compress parts of the lungs, impeding respiration.** In the hospital, it can **make calculating medication doses, inserting intravenous tubes and moving patients more difficult.** It can **stimulate parts of the body's hormonal system, worsening COVID-19,** which often provokes a powerful inflammatory response itself. **Being overweight is associated with a wide range of other chronic conditions from heart disease to diabetes, that increase vulnerability to the worst impacts of the infection.**

**People with a high BMI should take extra care to avoid getting sick.** Be extra cautious - wear your mask, wash your hands and avoid large gatherings. **There are things you can do to improve your health and reduce potential COVID-19 outcomes. Losing 5-10% of your body weight is enough to have an impact.** It doesn't take much weight loss to make a difference in lowering your health risks. You don't have to become a slim Jim to benefit. **Talk to a doctor about lifestyle and nutritional changes to promote weight loss.** Start off taking small steps which will ultimately result in big change. **Taking these small steps is worth it!**

