

Obesity: Complementary/Alternative Medicine

Obesity is defined as a state of being more than twenty percent above
•fat percentage greater than thirty percent for women and twenty-five percent men

QUICK REVIEW

A successful program for weight loss must be consistent with the four cornerstones of good health: proper diet, adequate exercise, a positive mental attitude, and the right support for the body through natural measures.

Most Americans are overweight because they eat too much fat and sugar, and are not physically active enough. Television watching has been linked to the onset of obesity, and there is a dose-related effect (i.e., the more TV that is watched, the greater the degree of obesity). The physiological theories of obesity are tied to brain serotonin levels; diet induced thermogenesis, the activity of the sympathetic nervous system, the metabolism of the fat cells, and sensitivity to the hormone insulin. 5-hydroxytryptophan reduces the number of calories consumed and promotes weight loss.

When properly combined, plant stimulants such as ephedrine and caffeine can activate the sympathetic nervous system, thereby increasing the metabolic rate and diet-induced thermogenesis.

Fiber supplements have been shown to enhance blood sugar control and insulin effects, as well as actually reducing the number of calories absorbed by the body.

One of the key goals in enhancing weight loss is to increase the sensitivity of cells throughout the body to the hormone insulin. Chromium supplementation has been demonstrated to lower body weight yet increase lean body mass.

Presumably as a result of increased insulin sensitivity.

Medium-chain triglycerides (MCTS) may promote weight loss by increasing thermogenesis.

Hydroxycitrate has been shown to be 'a powerful inhibitor of fat formation in animals.

Clinical studies have indicated that CoQ₁₀ may help promote weight loss.

TREATMENT SUMMARY

A successful program for weight loss must be consistent with the four cornerstones of good health: proper diet, adequate exercise, a positive mental attitude, and the right support for the body through natural measures. All of these components are critical and interrelated. A successful program must incorporate these four measures, as improvement in one facet may be enough to result in some positive changes, but impacting all four will produce the greatest results.

Diet

Follow the recommendations given in the chapter A HEALTH-PROMOTING Diet.

Psychological Support

It is extremely important to follow the recommendations given in the chapter A POSITIVE MENTAL ATTITUDE. Overweight individuals tend to suffer a great deal of assaults on their self-esteem and self-image.
Lifestyle

Exercise is absolutely critical to an effective weight-loss program. Follow the recommendations given in the chapter A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE.

Nutritional Supplements

Follow the recommendations given in the chapter SUPPLEMENTARY MEASURES.

- 5-HTP: 50-100 mg 20 minutes before meals for the first two weeks; then double the dosage if weight loss is less than 1 pound per week (higher dosages of 5-HTP [e.g., 300 mg] are associated with nausea, but this symptom disappears after six weeks of use)
 - Chromium: 200-400 mcg per day
- Medium-chain triglycerides: 1-2 tbsp per day in the diet
- Hydroxycitrate: 500 mg three times per day
 - Coenzyme Q10: 100--300 mg per day

Botanical Medicines

Combinations of an ephedrine source, such as *Ephedra sinica*, with a methylxanthine source, such as coffee (*Coffea arabica*), tea (*Camellia sinensis*), cola nut (*Cola nitida*), and/or guarana (*Paullinea cupana*), can be used at a dosage that provides 20-30 mg of ephedrine and 80-100 mg of methylxanthines per day.