

Obesity and cardiac problems

One must maintain a healthy weight, eat less meat, stay away from sweetened bottle drinks, increase fibre intake and exercise regularly to avoid cardiac disease, says Dr Pradeep Chowbey

Symptoms of most cardiac problems include chest pain, difficulty in breathing or shortness of breath and pain or numbness in some parts of the body. Other possible symptoms may include a racing or slow heart-beat, chest pain and dizziness. Cardiac problem is the leading cause of death in adults. The heart disease that takes thousands of lives every year is coronary heart disease.

Morbid or class-3 obesity is dangerous and can cause cardiovascular disease, including heart attack, stroke, heart failure, peripheral vascular disease and arrhythmias. Obesity is a major independent risk factor for heart disease. Narrowing of the arteries is 10 times more common in obese people compared to people of normal weight. Blood clots can also form in narrowed arteries and cause a stroke.

Obesity produces conditions which in turn lead to cardiac problems. Some of these conditions are:

- **High blood pressure (hypertension):** High blood pressure increases the risk of cardiovascular disease.

- **High blood cholesterol:** One of the major risk factors for heart disease is high

blood cholesterol. Extra cholesterol enters the body when the intake of meat, eggs and dairy products increases.

- **Physical inactivity:**

Exercise burns calories, helps in controlling cholesterol levels and diabetes and may lower blood pressure. Exercise also strengthens the heart muscle and makes the arteries more flexible.

If you are morbidly obese, you are at a high risk of cardiovascular disease.

Hence it is essential to know your body mass index (BMI). If your BMI is more than 32.5 it is imperative to consult a bariatric surgeon. Once a person reaches this stage, traditional methods of weight loss do not help. However, people with an ideal BMI count can try the following things at home to keep off the pounds and at the same time avoid chances of developing a cardiac disease:

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Eat less meat
- Stay away from sweetened bottle drinks
- Increase fibre intake
- Exercise regularly

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