



Medical Options for Treating Obesity

Fact Sheet

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The Obesity Algorithm™, presented by the American Society of Bariatric Physicians (“ASBP”), includes both evidence-based medicine and the expert opinion of experienced obesity medicine specialists. The Obesity Algorithm charts offer guidance to physicians for the diagnosis of obesity and the evaluation and treatment of individuals affected by obesity, since traditional advice to “eat less and exercise more” is simply not sufficient or comprehensive.

Given the American Medical Association’s 2013 decision to declare obesity a disease state, this algorithm addresses obesity as a complex and chronic disease and outlines the importance of a comprehensive, long-term approach to the medical management of obesity.

Obesity Algorithm Facts

- The evaluation of an individual with obesity typically includes a complete history, physical examination and laboratory tests in order to identify an individual’s contributing factors and effectively treat obesity.
- Early intervention in the treatment of obesity is important rather than waiting until disease develops and complications arise.
- Obesity medicine specialists are experts trained in the evaluation and management of individuals affected by obesity. Obesity medicine specialists can become certified by the American Board of Obesity Medicine.
- The treatment of an individual with obesity should include an individualized treatment plan. The treatment plan may include lifestyle change (i.e., diet, exercise and behavioral therapy) medications, very low-calorie diets and/or surgery.
- This algorithm includes guidance for physicians’ use of medications approved by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration in 2012 (i.e., Qsymia™ and BELVIQ®).
- The ASBP Obesity Algorithm may help to reduce health care expenditures because it includes medical therapies that are effective in managing obesity, and these therapies are less expensive than bariatric surgery.
- Fat cells can become “sick” and promote inflammation and disease throughout the human body, including increasing the risk of developing cancer.
- Some individuals have an elevated body mass index (BMI) but have “healthy fat,” and others may have a normal BMI but have “sick fat.” BMI should not be the only measure to determine the presence of obesity.

Obesity Facts

- Obesity has reached epidemic levels, and affects 78 million adults in the United States.
- Obesity is the second leading cause of preventable death in the United States.
- Obesity is the leading cause of type 2 diabetes mellitus, which affects 25.8 million people, or 8.3 percent, of the U.S. population.
- Obesity is a disease that affects people of all socioeconomic levels.