

As a Board certified peripheral vascular surgeon, management of risk factors associated with vascular disease has always been an integral part of our patient care regimen. These risk factors include high blood pressure, elevated serum cholesterol and triglycerides, smoking and even diabetes. Over the years it became clear that obesity was a common denominator shared by so many of these patients. Eliminate obesity and the other risk factors became much less of a problem. Thus expanding the scope of our practice to include an effective weight management program was a natural step.

Our country is clearly suffering from an obesity epidemic. The American Obesity Association ([www.obesity.org](http://www.obesity.org) –link to this site by clicking on name) estimates that at least 127 million adults in the US are overweight and 60 million of those, including 1 in 5 Floridians, are considered obese. According to the Communicable Disease Center ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) – can link directly to sub sites dealing with obesity:

<http://www.cdc.gov/genomics/resources/diseases/obesity/index.htm>;

<http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/index.html>; <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/index.html>)

both sexes are significantly affected, with 71% of males and 62% of females considered overweight and 31% of men and 33% of women defined as obese. Patients who are overweight are at a significantly increased risk of developing a wide variety of medical problems when compared with patients of normal or low weight. These medical conditions include cardiovascular disease and stroke, osteoarthritis and joint disease, chronic back pain, cancer, sleep disorders, lung disease and a variety of metabolic disorders and psychological problems, including Type II diabetes, high blood pressure (hypertension), gall bladder disease, elevated cholesterol (hyperlipidemia), chronic depression, anxiety and low self esteem.

A recent National Cancer Institute study demonstrated that overweight adults in their 50's were 20-40% more likely to die over their next decade. Deaths due to obesity may soon exceed those related to tobacco use. Furthermore, the psychological and emotional trauma resulting from low self esteem exacts an additional toll on overweight patients and may further exacerbate chronic illnesses.

Science has learned that fat cells, formerly thought to be inert energy storage depots, are quite active metabolically, producing at least 90 signaling compounds (hormones) that adversely affect numerous body organ systems. It logically follows then that eliminating excess fat might well improve overall health. In fact, a large study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association reported that major weight loss in severely obese patients eliminated diabetes in 77% and sleep apnea in 80%, improved high blood pressure in 62% and lowered cholesterol in 70%.

How can an individual tell whether their weight is too high, thus representing a potential health risk? Body Mass Index or BMI (weight in kg / height in meters<sup>2</sup>) and Body Fat Percentage or BF% have been used as tools to identify individuals who are overweight. We prefer to rely on BF% to categorize overweight patients since BMI make no distinction between weight due to excess fat and weight due to bone structure or muscle development. BF%, measured on a bio-impedance scale, focuses on the real culprit—excess body fat tissue. Body Fat Percentage ranges for women and men are:

#### Weight Category by Body Fat Percentage (BF%)

<u>Weight Category</u>	<u>Obesity Class</u>	<u>BF%</u>	
		<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>
Essential Fat		10-12	2-4
Athletic		13-20	5-13
Normal / Fit		21-24	14-20
Overweight		25-29	21-24
Significantly Overweight*	I	30-34	25-29
Obese*	II	35-39	30-34
Significantly Obese*	III	40-44	35-39
Morbidly Obese*	IV	≥45	≥40

\* *Meets Program Criteria*

When compared to patients of normal weight, obese patients face an increased risk of Type II diabetes (>7X), high blood pressure (6.4X), elevated cholesterol (1.9X), asthma (2.7X) and arthritis (4.4X). Men with a BMI >30 face a 70% increase in their risk of death over five years and in women with a BMI >29 the increase in mortality risk is 50%.

Our *Prescription* Weight Loss Clinic® program has proven highly successful in helping patients to lose excess weight. From the comprehensive initial evaluation and counseling session, through weekly followup visits during Step 1 Weight Reduction and into the Steps 2 & 3 Lifestyle Transition and Weight Management Steps, our patients can be assured that their condition is closely monitored by trained medical professionals who can deal with any issue that arises.

Close medical supervision is the hallmark of every aspect of our 3 Step program. During the first Weight Reduction Step patients are placed on a Very Low Calorie Ketogenic Diet (*VLCKD*) combined with an exercise program. Prescription appetite suppressant medication is dispensed weekly from the *Prescription* physician's office in order to make patients comfortable while dieting. Weekly visits monitor steady progress toward the goal set by the patient and supplemental injections promote well-being and support metabolism. This approach has been highly successful. Clinical records of *Prescription* patients regularly document weight losses of 5-10 pounds in the first week and more than 20 pounds in the first month when patients are conscientious in complying with their prescribed program. When the goal weight is reached, patients are weaned off medication as dietary options are greatly expanded during the second Step - Lifestyle Transition.

One of the most frustrating things about most diet and weight loss programs is regaining lost weight after the program is completed. We make a strong effort to prevent regaining through our unique and comprehensive Weight Management program. This proprietary program teaches patients a straightforward, yet effective, method of managing their weight after the initial weight loss, instead of slipping back into a lifestyle pattern in which their weight manages them. Step 2 training focuses on dietary principles for long term weight

control and regular exercise is emphasized. Patient compliance is easier since our program is based on a diet selected by each patient, rather than a standard program which may not correspond with individual patient food preferences. Continued periodic visits during Step 3 verify continued weight control. Again, our results document the success of this approach.

In addition to all of the social and psychological benefits derived from bringing a burgeoning weight problem back under control, patients realize a direct benefit to overall health, particularly cardiovascular health. It has been gratifying to see so many patients walk out of our offices weekly with the realization that their weight issues have become more manageable and their overall health and their outlook on life have been improved with the help of Prescription's simple and effective plan. Whether you need to lose a major amount of weight or just trim up to get back into better shape, the *Prescription* Weight Loss Clinic® program will work for you!