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1. Why Weight Gain Occurs

Weight gain can be extremely frustrating and usually we associate it with eating too much. However, there could be other reasons why you may be gaining weight, even if you are exercising regularly and eating healthily.

There are a wide number of reasons why you have started to gain weight. The most common being that you have overindulged. However, there are other reasons why weight gain could occur and some of the reasons which you might not have thought about could include:

1.1. A Medical Condition

For many people the cause of their weight gain is medical. It could be that there is an underlying medical problem such as Diabetes or another serious illness. There are many more medical reasons for weight gain than most people realise.

While thyroid problems are often cited as an excuse for excessive weight, it can often be a contributing factor to weight gain as it regulates the body's metabolism. Some sources have speculated that as many as 10% of women may have thyroid trouble of some degree.

Other medical conditions such as menopause and other hormonal imbalances can have a serious impression on your weight over time.

It could be that you have recently taken a new medication and that is responsible for the weight gain. The contraceptive pill for example is well known for adding extra weight to the body and so if you have just started taking it, it may be worth switching pills.

The contraceptive pill is not the only medication that is well known for increasing weight, steroids and similar medications can lead to putting on weight. Some medical conditions such as IBS and asthma are often treated using steroids, and this could lead to weight gain.

Other medications can also cause weight gain, so if you have recently started new medication it is always best to speak to your doctor to see if that is the problem. They will be able to give you an examination and you will then see if the cause is indeed medical.

1.2. Food Allergies

Another common cause of weight gain can include allergies to certain foods. The most common food allergies tend to be dairy and nuts. Obviously some food allergies can be deadly but in many cases the foods just make you gain weight and feel a little nauseous. So, it may well be worth going to the doctors and having an allergy test to see if you are in fact allergic to any foods.

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1.3. Menopause and Age

The menopause is a difficult enough time in any woman's life, and one symptom that is very common for women is weight gain- particularly around the waist and hips.

Hormones and fat cells are all linked into your metabolism, appetite and digestive system, and an imbalance or radical change in the levels within this system can lead to drastic changes in your weight.

The changes in hormone levels are not the only cause of weight gain during this period of our lives, ageing can lead to weight gain in both men and women. As we age, our metabolism slows down, and our digestive system can have more difficulty in processing our food correctly.

Some studies show regular runners in good health would have to run an additional 1.4 miles per week every year to combat the changes in their metabolic rate. Due to metabolic rate changes, and the tendency of the body as you age to lose muscle mass and increase fatty tissue it can be an uphill struggle to even stay at your usual weight as you age.

1.4. Emotional Reasons

Your emotions obviously affect how you feel, and by extension how you feel about yourself. If you are feeling low, food can often be a great comforter. Unfortunately, it is usually the 'bad' foods that we reach for to make us feel better.

Comfort foods such as chocolate, sweets, crisps and fried foods can make us feel better but they are not good for us. This can sometimes lead to a downwards spiral as you eat because you feel bad, and this then makes you feel worse because you know that eating foods like this will make you fatter.

Comfort eating is only one way that your emotions can contribute to an increase in weight, depression medication can affect your body and metabolism and lead to weight gain.

1.5. Quitting Smoking

Many people who are trying to improve their lifestyle by quitting smoking notice that their weight goes up when they do. Often this can be due to replacing the cigarettes with snacks, but there are other reasons as well.

Not many people realise that smoking actually burns calories, up to 200 calories a day in a heavy smoker. In addition, it also suppresses the appetite so you feel less hungry while you are a smoker.

Because cigarettes are a stimulant and burn calories, smoking can actually speed up your metabolism somewhat too, so when you quit there are many reasons that you are likely to gain weight.

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1.6. You could be lacking essential fats

Many people do not realize that they do in fact need some fats in their diet. Not all fats are bad and foods such as fish and olive oil contain these essential fats that our bodies need. These fats, often known as Omega-3 fats are found in fish and can lower cholesterol and reduce the risks of arthritis and other joint problems. It is recommended that at most 33% of our calorie intake is fat, and no more than 10% of our calories should be from saturated fats because of the increased health risks such as increased cholesterol from eating too much “bad” fats.

If you don't get enough of the beneficial fats such as Omega-3 you can end up having cravings for fatty foods, and that is when you give in and gain weight. So, ensure that you stock up on good fats and add them into your diet.

2. Health Risks Associated With Obesity

Whilst it is important to be happy with yourself no matter how much you weigh, if you are clinically obese unfortunately there are certain health risks you are prone to. This means that unless something is done, you will not stay healthy and happy for long!

The Various Risks Involved

It is important to note that these risks are for obese people, not just for people who are a little overweight. Obese generally means that you weigh a lot more than your recommended weight and that is when problems can occur. There are also varying levels of obesity and those include being slightly obese to being morbidly obese. Obviously the more obese you are, the higher your risk of developing serious health problems. So, when exactly do you know that there is a problem and what exactly are the problems which could occur?

2.1. Diabetes

It is a sad fact that many people who have become obese have developed Type 2 diabetes. Even if you are only 11 pounds overweight, you still have a higher risk of developing the condition but obviously the more obese you are, the higher the risk actually is. Type 2 diabetes is a serious condition and it is thought that around eighty percent of people who have diabetes are overweight.

2.2. Heart Problems

One of the main risks with obesity includes heart problems such as heart disease. The risk of collapsing, dying suddenly and of having a heart attack are all increased once you are overweight and if you are morbidly obese, generally you are a walking time bomb. Heart problems are serious and often people who are obese also suffer from high blood pressure which can also be extremely serious.

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2.3. Breathing Difficulties

Another common problem is breathing difficulties. Carrying around extra weight does take its toll on the body and all obese people suffer from breathing difficulties due to that extra weight. Climbing the stairs and even tying your own shoe laces will become a problem and it is when that happens that you know you have a problem!

2.4. Emotional Problems

As well as the many physical health problems, obesity often takes its toll on your emotions too. Depression, mood swings and feeling insecure are all common problems which many obese people develop. Often these emotional problems are usually a lot more painful for the sufferer than the physical problems actually are.

Overall obesity is a serious problem and whilst it is important to be happy with yourself, you also need to ensure that you are healthy too. If you are overweight and healthy you do not need to worry about losing weight, but when it is causing you problems that is when you need to start thinking about what is important to you. So, if you are obese why not make that change today? After all, the advantages of the change far outweigh the disadvantages!

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