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Dr Chrystal's vision is to educate and motivate the individual and population towards better health outcomes.

Her mission is to help make sense of the rich Science articles that are important to health to the everyday person through her articles and to highlight the key health issues that affect you.

We need to recognise obesity as both a disease and a driver of other diseases.

Obesity is recognized as a disease by the World Health Organization (WHO).

It is considered a disease because it involves complex biological, environmental, and behavioural factors that disrupt normal body processes and significantly impact health.

It's not simply an issue of overeating or lack of willpower but a multifaceted condition that affects multiple systems in the body.

Obesity is a long-term condition that tends to worsen over time without intervention. It can lead to additional health complications, including type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and certain cancers, making it a progressive disease that requires ongoing management.

Obesity affects how the body functions, especially in relation to metabolism and the regulation of energy. The body's ability to store and burn fat is often altered in obese individuals, leading to an imbalance that affects organs like the heart, liver, and kidneys. This imbalance can contribute to the development of metabolic disorders.

Genetics plays a significant role in obesity. Certain genes can affect how an individual's body processes food and burns fat. These genetic factors may influence appetite, fat storage, and the body's ability to regulate weight, further supporting the idea that obesity is a disease with biological underpinnings.

Hormones play a central role in regulating hunger, metabolism, and fat storage. Conditions like leptin resistance (where the body doesn't respond to signals telling it to stop eating) and insulin resistance (where the body doesn't use insulin properly) are common in obesity and further contribute to the complexity of the condition. These hormonal disruptions can make it more difficult to lose weight, even with changes in diet or exercise.

Obesity is influenced by environmental factors such as access to healthy food, socioeconomic status, and physical activity.

Psychological factors, including stress, depression, and emotional eating, can also play a role. These environmental and psychological influences can exacerbate obesity, making it difficult for individuals to control their weight.

Treating obesity often requires a comprehensive approach that addresses lifestyle changes, medical interventions, and sometimes surgical treatments, all of which aim to manage or reverse the health complications associated with the condition.

How do I calculate my BMI?

Your BMI can be calculated manually with the following formulas: $\text{weight (kg)} / \text{height}^2 \text{ (m)}$. For instance, an individual who is 74kg and 1.74m tall can be calculated as follows: $74 / (1.74 * 1.74) = \text{BMI } 24.4$.

Ideally, your Body Mass Index (BMI) should be between 18.5 and 22.9kg/m², as shown in the table below:

BMI	Category	Risk of health problems like heart disease and diabetes
≥ 27.5	Obese	High Risk
23.0 – 27.4	Overweight	Moderate Risk
18.5 – 22.9	Normal	Low risk (healthy range)

Note:

BMI should not be used to calculate health risks in pregnant women, people with a muscular build and the elderly. These BMI values also do not apply to youths below 18 years old.

Waist-to-hip ratio

Also known as waist-hip ratio, is the circumference of the waist divided by the circumference of the hips.

To measure the circumference of their waist, a person should stand up straight and breathe out, then measure their waist just above the belly button with a tape measure. This should be where the waist is smallest.

Be careful not to pull the tape measure too tight, and remember to record the waist measurement before moving on to the hips.

To measure the circumference of their hips, stand up straight and wrap a tape measure around the widest part of the hips. Take the measurement where the ends of the tape measure overlap, again do not pull it too tight.

To calculate the WHR, divide the first measurement (waist circumference) by the second measurement (hip circumference). Measurements can be recorded in either centimetres (cm) or inches (in) without affecting the ratio.

According to WHO:

- a WHR of over 0.85 indicates obesity in women
- a WHR of over 0.90 indicates obesity in men

Conclusion:

Obesity is a disease.

There is hope.

Seek help in a safe supported environment with your doctor.

Having a team of health professionals with your regular medical doctors will help you towards improving your health for the long term.

If you're looking to make lasting changes to your health, consider seeking out a health coach in collaboration with your family doctor to create a comprehensive, personalized health plan.

Key points

- Make healthy lifestyle choices.
- Engage with your doctor regularly for your health checks.
- Incorporate health coaching with your family doctor to improve your health and wellness.

Health tips:

Surround yourself in a conducive healthy living environment.

Be mindful of the physical and digital environments you surround yourself in. Spend more time engaging with health seeking behaviour activities and communities to inspire and motivate your fitness journey.

Engage with your doctor and health professionals regularly.

Schedule regular health checks with your doctor, health coach and other health professionals.

Food for thought:

Be thankful for a day to make a difference to your health while you are healthy and safe.

Never take for granted your health when healthy.

Make improvements if you are not.

Develop a healthy relationship with exercise. It is the best thing you can do for yourself.

Do something today that your future self will thank you for.

The best day to start exercising is today.

Final Thoughts:

The next time you have your health screening done, spare a moment to reflect on your lifestyle habits and discuss with your doctor on ways to improve the above towards a better and healthier you and our planet.

'Towards better health outcomes'



Dr Chrystal Fong provides comprehensive health screening and GP services to suit your individual needs.

We hope to be of service in improving your health and well-being

Schedule an appointment with Dr Chrystal Fong:



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About the author:

Dr Chrystal Fong Chern Ying (MBBS Melbourne, FRACGP) is currently practicing as a family physician at Asia HealthPartners under the subsidiary of Singapore Institute of Advanced Medicine (SAM) Holdings, located at Lucky Plaza, Orchard, Singapore.

Dr Chrystal Fong is listed on the editors list of health screening providers on Health365, a healthcare, wellness and aesthetic medicine publishing agency in Asia.

She is featured in the Britishpedia's 6th edition of 'Successful People in Malaysia and Singapore'.

With her interest in lifestyle medicine, medical technology and longevity medicine (Certified), she also takes personal pride in living the lifestyle medicine pillars herself and advocating through her sports communities and social media platforms.

Her personal mantra being 'The world is changed by your example, not your opinion.'

She is a member of the Singapore College of Family Physicians, Singapore Medical Association, Singapore Society of Behavioural Health, Singaporean Society of Lifestyle Medicine, American College of Lifestyle Medicine, HIMSS (Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society).

Being certified in Wellness and Behaviour modification with International Sports Academy, her consultations incorporate health coaching methods. She is also certified in Exercise Prescription and is on the registry of 'Exercise is Medicine' Singapore.