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OBESITY AND DIGESTIVE DISORDERS

A Physician Reference



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OBESITY AND THE GUT: a two-way street

- In most patients increased food intake is responsible for obesity.
- Obesity in turn has been associated with increased risk of developing several digestive disorders.

Look for overweight and obesity

- Obtain BMI and waist circumference
- Given the epidemic of obesity, people who look "normal" may not have a normal BMI

Several effects of obesity on digestive organs are related to metabolic syndrome (insulin resistance syndrome)

- Look for clinical and biochemical signs of insulin resistance syndrome including:
 - high BMI
 - abdominal obesity
 - high blood pressure
 - elevated fasting blood sugar
 - elevated HbA1C
 - high triglycerides
 - low HDL

Look for digestive disease associated with obesity (see Table)

Counsel your patients on keeping normal BMI and losing extra weight

The American College of Gastroenterology understands and appreciates the challenges of counselling patients about their weight. ACG has developed resources for patients on weight loss and GI health available at the ACG Web site www.acg.gi.org/obesity. These online tools are offered to help a busy gastroenterologist start the conversation with their overweight or obese patients, with the ultimate goal of helping patients to better manage their health problems and to change their medical course.



OBESITY AND DIGESTIVE DISORDERS

	Magnitude of Increased Risk with Obesity (compared to normal or low BMI)	Comments
ESOPHAGUS		
GERD symptoms	50%	
Erosive esophagitis	50-100%	
Barrett's esophagus	2- fold	Abdominal obesity
Esophageal adenocarcinoma	2- fold	
GALLBLADDER		
Stones	2-3 fold	More in women
Cancer	35% to 85%	More in women
PANCREAS		
Cancer	35% to 85%	Abdominal obesity
Worse acute pancreatitis	20-50%	
COLON		
Adenoma (especially advanced)	50%-100%	
Cancer	2-fold	Colon (not rectum), more in men, more with abdominal obesity
LIVER		
Non alcoholic fatty liver disease	2-3 fold	Abdominal obesity
Advanced HCV-related disease	50%	
Cirrhosis	30%-50%	
Hepatocellular carcinoma	30%-50%	

