

Weight Can't Wait: Guide for the Management of Obesity in the Primary Care Setting



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**Guide for the Management
of Obesity in the Primary
Care Setting**

Endorsing Organizations:

- American Board of Obesity Medicine
- American Society of Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery
- American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists
- American Association of Nurse Practitioners
- American Medical Group Association
- American Academy of Physician Assistants
- American College of Physicians
- Endocrine Society
- Obesity Medicine Association
- Obesity Action Coalition
- The Obesity Society

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Guide for the Management of Adult Obesity in Primary Care

When weight counseling is appropriate, health care professionals need a short, accessible, practical, informative guide for obesity treatment. The treatment of obesity in the primary care setting can be divided into three sections: pre-encounter, encounter, and post-encounter. The following guidance for health care professionals' treatment of obesity includes permission to discuss obesity, while addressing weight bias; diagnosis of obesity; and shared decision-making in the management of obesity.

We recognize that what follows may not be possible to accomplish in one visit. The direction these discussions take should depend on the interest and engagement of the patient and the demands on the provider's time.

Pre-encounter



Providers should ask patients to fill out a pre-visit questionnaire to provide important information prior to the encounter. Suggested pre-screen questions include:

- Have you ever had difficulty managing your weight?
- Age of onset and maximum weight?
- Family history of unhealthy weight?
- What factors have led to your weight gain, weight loss, or sustained weight loss?
- Do you believe your weight is impacting your health or quality of life? How?
- Have you had negative experiences with health care providers about your weight?
- How do you think I can help you better manage your weight?



Gather information during the pre-encounter to start a weight-related conversation with the patient, including diet and physical activity history; medications; existing co-morbidities or risk factors; stress; sleep; quality of life (QOL), depression and surgical history.



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- Primary care settings in which effective obesity care takes place:
 - **pre-encounter**
 - **encounter**
 - **post-encounter**
- An additional curated resources list is also available.

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The Six As

- **Ask:** Ask permission to discuss weight; listen to patient concerns
- **Assess:** Review information collected at pre-screen
- **Advise:** Focus on positive benefits of weight reduction.
- **Agree:** Use shared decision-making to establish next steps
- **Assist:** Present treatment options including referrals, depending on patient preference
- **Arrange:** In shared decision making with the patient, make referrals for lifestyle modification, intensive behavioral modification, medication, or bariatric surgery. Schedule follow-up and coordinate care

Pre-Encounter

- **Calculate BMI and weight trajectory**
- **Personal weight history**
- **Stress, sleep, quality of life, depression**
- **24h dietary recall**
- **Physical activity**
- **Medications**
- **Existing comorbidities or risk factors**



Encounter



"Is now a good time for us to discuss how your weight and health may be affecting each other, and how we can work together on it?"

Yes.



No.



Questions for Patient

- What concerns you most about your weight?
- What is the single most important outcome that you hope to achieve with weight loss?
- What would stand in the way of achieving this outcome?
- Is there a first step that you are ready to take?
- What impact will the changes we have discussed have on your life?
- Obesity is a chronic problem. What frequency and type of follow-up would be most helpful?

Provider:

" I understand that you may not be ready to discuss your weight. However, I am concerned about the impact of your weight on your health. There may be some things that we can do together in the future. Please make a follow up appointment if you'd like to discuss this in the future. "

Response from Provider

- Acknowledge concerns
- Link obesity to comorbidities
- Provide resources
- Schedule follow-up or referral





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Post-Encounter



"Is the patient interested in pursuing treatment of obesity?"

Yes.



No.

- Provide patient with checklist/handout with shared decisions
- Define the best ways to measure progress
- Schedule a follow-up visit focusing on obesity to assess progress

- Does this decision reflect a lack of financial or physical access to follow up?
- Educational materials may be provided
- Indicate availability for future discussion and shared decision making
- Provider should reassess readiness to change at future clinic visits

Weight Can't Wait Curated Resources



Include curated provider resources, guidelines, image galleries, and resources to share with patients.

Accessible at: go.gwu.edu/wcwresources

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