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Overview
Staying fit is a challenge for many people. Carrying too much body fat is bad for your health. Being "overweight" means you weigh more than what we consider normal for your body type. If you keep gaining weight, you may become "obese." Let's take a few minutes to learn about weight and your health.

Causes
What causes you to gain weight? For some, it's because of an unhealthy lifestyle. If you eat more calories than your body needs for fuel, you gain weight. Fast foods and processed foods are common culprits. And not getting enough regular exercise leads to weight gain. You can also gain weight because of a genetic syndrome or an endocrine disorder.

Measuring Weight
How do you know if you weigh too much? Doctors often use the Body Mass Index score. We also call it your "BMI." It's a number that compares your weight to your height. Have your doctor calculate your BMI, or find a BMI calculator on the web to figure it out yourself. Adults with a 25 to 29.9 BMI are considered overweight. A BMI of 30 or higher is considered obese. In children and teens, BMI scales are adjusted according to age and gender.

Complications
Being overweight or obese can lead to a wide range of health complications. It raises your risk for heart disease and high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and osteoarthritis. It can lead to heart attack, stroke, and various cancers. Ask your doctor for a full list of possible complications.

Treatment
If you weigh too much, talk to your doctor about treatment options. You may benefit from lifestyle changes, or from medications. Your doctor will create a care plan that's right for you.