

# WAYS TO PREVENT OBESITY



**PLATINUM  
HEALTH**

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), worldwide obesity has more than doubled since 1980. Obesity is defined by the WHO as having abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that presents a risk to health.

Almost 70% of South African women are either overweight or obese and this is the highest rates of obesity in women in Africa. Among South African men, 31% are overweight or obese. This is according to the 2016 South Africa Demographic and Health Survey (SADHS) and is based on the body mass index (BMI) score. Obesity can be prevented by following basic principles of healthy eating. Here are simple lifestyle changes that can help you lose weight and prevent obesity:

## Diet

- Focus on eating at least five to seven servings of whole fruits and vegetables every day.
- Avoid processed food. Highly processed foods, like white bread and many boxed snack foods, are a common source of empty calories, which tend to add up quickly.
- Reduce sugar consumption. Major sources of added sugar to avoid include sugary beverages, including sodas and energy and sports drinks; pies, cookies and cakes.
- Limit artificial sweeteners. Rather opt for a small amount of honey, which is a natural alternative.
- Skip saturated fats. Focus instead on sources of healthy fats like avocados, olive oil, and tree nuts.
- Drink more water and eliminate all sugared beverages from your diet.

## Exercise daily

Exercise helps in keeping your body fit and prevent you from becoming overweight by burning the bad calories and releasing the toxins from the body.

## Sleep

The role of sleep in overall well-being cannot be overstated. This extends to the goal of preventing obesity, too. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends seven or more hours of sleep for adults 18 and over, and even more sleep for younger people.

## Treatment

Where lifestyle changes have been made and progress is positive, consult one of the Platinum Health Medical Scheme (PHMS) Medical Centres for advice on medicinal treatment that could be prescribed to assist you on your weight loss journey. Our 2024 benefit schedule includes assistance for members in this regard.

For more information or guidance, talk to a Platinum Health healthcare provider closest to you.

Sources: [www.who.int/health-topics/obesity](http://www.who.int/health-topics/obesity); [www.verywellhealth.com/obesity-prevention](http://www.verywellhealth.com/obesity-prevention)