

# Understand obesity: it is not what we know!<sup>1</sup>

Obesity is a chronic disease impacting populations worldwide. People living with obesity face weight bias, stigma, discrimination, and challenges accessing empathetic evidenced-based healthcare.

To ensure that obesity is treated with the same level of compassion and respect given to other chronic diseases, it is important that these five key principles are understood:

## **It is undeniable that obesity is a complex, chronic disease**

Obesity is a chronic disease. It can last for a lifetime and requires ongoing management. Obesity should be diagnosed by a qualified healthcare professional based on an appropriate medical assessment.

## **Obesity is driven by powerful underlying biology, not by choice**

Obesity is a chronic disease resulting from the complex interactions between genetic, environmental, behavioral, and social factors. Obesity is not a personal failure or the sole result of a lack of willpower.

## **The many health effects of excess weight can start early**

The health complications associated with obesity can start early in life, and the longer obesity is left untreated, the greater the potential impact of these negative effects. Preventing excess weight gain has positive health benefits.

## **Obesity is treatable**

Multiple evidenced-based treatments are available to treat obesity. Obesity care and weight loss are not the same. The treatment of obesity focuses on overall health, not just weight reduction.

## **Weight bias, stigma, and discrimination are harmful**

People with obesity often face stigma and bias which can manifest as discrimination. Every person deserves appropriate treatment regardless of body size. The decision to seek treatment for obesity is a personal one, and a person's choice should be respected.

**Disclaimer:** This document is for educational and awareness purpose only and is not a replacement of medical advice. Always reach out to your healthcare professional for more information.

### **Reference:**

1. <https://obesitycanada.ca/understanding-obesity/>



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Driving change in obesity

\*The person in the image shown is a model and not a real patient

