

SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a surge in weight gain and disordered eating, with 42% of U.S. adults reporting undesired weight gain since the start of the pandemic. Mental health professionals should address the issue, as it has not affected all Americans equally. People in marginalized groups are more likely to live in "food deserts" with limited access to healthy food, and are more likely to work as essential workers, increasing their risk of contracting COVID and stress. Weight gain is a normal reaction to an abnormal circumstance, but weight stigma runs deep and contributes to depression, anxiety, emotional distress, and disordered eating. It also has implications for public health, as those with higher weights are at increased risk of complications from COVID-19.

WHY IS THAT?

One of the main reasons was the stress eating! Also the overall increments in BW are an alarming effect of lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to potential higher incidence of overweight, obesity and related health-risks as well as other noncommunicable diseases. Adult obesity prevalence was 3 percent higher over the period from March 13, 2020, to March 18, 2021,



The extra weight of COVID-19

Written By Kirsten Weir



Having obesity increases the risk of severe illness from COVID-19. People who are overweight may also be at increased risk.



Having obesity may triple the risk of hospitalization due to a COVID-19 infection.



As BMI increases, the risk of death from COVID-19 increases.

SOURCE: [HTTPS://WWW.CDC.GOV/OBESITY/DATA/OBESITY-AND-COVID-19.HTML](https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/obesity-and-covid-19.html)

EATING DISORDERS

A study of United Kingdom residents during the pandemic lockdown found that 87% of people with eating disorders reported their symptoms worsened during the pandemic. A study in Australia found that among people with a self-reported history of eating disorders, food restriction, binge eating, purging, and exercise behaviors increased during the pandemic. Lack of access to in-person treatments may have been a setback for people in treatment for eating disorders. Meanwhile, public health guidance often worked against healthy eating habits



Weight gain and disordered eating spiked during the stress of the pandemic. Health psychologists discuss why it matters—and how to get back on track.

The Connection Between Anxiety and Eating Disorders

Anxiety disorders is the treatment of someone with an eating disorder. On the one hand, it is understandable that an eating disorder can lead to anxiety about fear of self-image, gaining weight, and societal pressures. However, often it is the anxiety disorder that triggers and/or perpetuates the eating disorder. With anxiety, one may feel out of control, leading to an individual to turn towards eating and food rituals to try to feel in control over their life. Eating is the one area in our life one can exercise complete control. And behaviors such as restricting, binge eating and purging (either from self-induced vomiting, exercise, or taking pills such as laxatives) are described as eliciting a rush or a high or a relaxing/numbing sensation and may be a way of regulating emotional distress. While the person feels they are regaining a sense of control and lowering their anxiety, they may be making unhealthy nutrition and dangerous decisions that can have devastating long-term consequences

HOW TO RELIEVE STRESS WITHOUT OVEREATING

When stress affects someone's appetite and waistline, the individual can forestall further weight gain by ridding the refrigerator and cupboards of high-fat, sugary foods. Keeping those "comfort foods" handy is just inviting trouble.

Here are some other suggestions for countering stress:

Meditation. Countless studies show that meditation reduces stress, although much of the research has focused on high blood pressure and heart disease. Meditation may also help people become more mindful of food choices. With practice, a person may be able to pay better attention to the impulse to grab a fat- and sugar-loaded comfort food and inhibit the impulse.

Exercise. While cortisol levels vary depending on the intensity and duration of exercise, overall exercise can blunt some of the negative effects of stress. Some activities, such as yoga and tai chi, have elements of both exercise and meditation.

Social support. Friends, family, and other sources of social support seem to have a buffering effect on the stress that people experience. For example, research suggests that people working in stressful situations, like hospital emergency departments, have better mental health if they have adequate social support. But even people who live and work in situations where the stakes aren't as high need help from time to time from friends and family.

Jocelyn Gladner

The Extra Weight of COVID-19

An article titled "The extra weight of COVID-19" was written by Kirsten Weir who is an award-winning journalist and writer whose work has appeared on a variety of platforms including mine. Weir states in her article that since “the start of the pandemic [there was] an average [weight] gain of 29 pounds,” Kristen Weir connects her claim about how adults and children to many different mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and even stress.

There has been a significant change in people's lifestyles as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has resulted in an increase in weight gain as a result. As a result of the pandemic, people have been experiencing stress, anxiety, and depression, which has had a significant psychological impact on them. There are several emotions that can lead to overeating and a lack of physical activity as a result of these emotions.

The reason for weight gain during the pandemic is primarily due to stress, which is one of the primary causes. There are many people who are worried about their health, finances, and the future of their jobs. As a result of stress, the cortisol hormone is released in the body, stimulating appetite, and contributing to overeating. Weir states in her article that parents are “experiencing heightened stress as they juggled working outside the home, staying safe, and caring for family members with schools and daycares closed” Because of this more parents and other people who are working are confirming that it is harder to work out and stay active at home because of lockdowns and social distancing measures that restrict their ability to exercise.

Weir also mentions a quote said by a clinical psychologist Rebecca Puhl that “Even before the pandemic, we’ve known that weight stigma contributes to depression and anxiety, emotional distress, and disordered eating.”> That is why depression and anxiety are another

psychological factor that contributes to weight gain during Covid-19. People who are depressed or stressing about the COVID-19 pandemic tend to eat more junk food as it provides temporary comfort. They also lack motivation for exercise or any physical activity. Moreover, boredom is another factor that leads to overeating during the pandemic. With limited options for entertainment and socializing, people turn towards food as a source of pleasure.

In conclusion, psychology plays a significant role in weight gain during Covid-19. Stress, depression, and boredom are some of the factors that contribute to this issue. It is essential to address these psychological factors through therapy or other means so that individuals can maintain a healthy lifestyle even during challenging times like these.