

New campaign launch reveals six major health benefits to losing weight

- Over 3 in 5 adults (63% of adult population) are at an increased risk from serious diseases and becoming seriously ill with COVID-19 as a result of being overweight
- The benefits of losing weight brought to life through a unique look inside the body and include preventing up to 12 types of cancers and preventing chronic back pain

A new Better Health marketing campaign has been launched today to help people prevent risks of developing serious illness and help reduce the risk of being hospitalised with COVID-19.

Better Health is working in partnership with 15 weight management and physical activity partners who are providing both free and discounted offers and the website will also signpost to local weight management support.

From reducing the risk of serious diseases such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and up to 12 types of cancer, to lowering the chances of being hospitalised with COVID-19, the multimedia campaign highlights the serious health conditions which could be prevented by losing excess weight and offers free support and guidance to achieve this goal.

It is estimated that over 3 in 5 adults(1) are at an increased risk from serious diseases as a result of being overweight. Losing just 5% of body weight can seriously reduce the chance of heart disease and could make all the difference in preventing treatable heart conditions(2).

The new campaign highlights six benefits that could have a lasting impact on a person's health by being a healthier weight:

1. Decreased risk of common cancers (colon, liver, pancreas, kidney)
2. Lowered risk of increased blood pressure
3. Reduced risk of heart disease
4. Less risk of developing diabetes
5. Less strain from chronic back & joint pain
6. Decreased risk of being hospitalised or becoming seriously ill with COVID-19

The benefits have been brought to life in a unique way, in a full body x-ray animation providing a window into the body, highlighting six key health risks that can be reduced if excess weight is lost.

GP and TV Doctor, Dr Hillary Jones said:

These six benefits highlight the impact of carrying excess weight, and the range of benefits that can be achieved by reducing your weight. Small changes every day can help you lose weight and feel

healthier.

With Better Health, there are a variety of free NHS endorsed apps, resources and online tools to help people introduce simple changes that will help them eat better and get active this new year, including the NHS Weight Loss Plan, Couch to 5K and Active 10 apps.

Public Health Minister Maggie Throup said:

The Better Health campaign returns today, focusing on improving adults' health and helping them get to a healthier weight.

January is a great time of the year for making resolutions and I hope that people can use this as a kick start moment to be more active and eat healthier – especially when losing body weight can have such a positive impact on our health, including reducing the chance of becoming seriously ill with COVID-19.

Deputy Chief Medical Officer and joint lead for the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, Dr Jeanelle de Gruchy said:

The New Year is a great time to make some healthy changes.

The Better Health campaign outlines the health benefits of losing weight and gives people the tools and resources to make small changes to improve their health.

Vanessa Hebditch, Director of Policy at the British Liver Trust said:

Obesity is a public health emergency and urgent action to tackle it is required to reduce the prevalence of fatty liver disease and other serious health conditions.

By 2030, experts predict that non-alcohol related fatty liver disease (NALFD) will become the leading cause of liver disease in the UK. Liver damage develops silently with no signs or symptoms and people often don't realise they have a problem until it is too late. Around one in five of us are already likely to have the early stages of fatty liver disease and many people are unaware that excess weight is a significant risk factor in this.

The British Liver Trust is proud to support the Better Health campaign which will help us all to make better choices when it comes to what we eat and drink as well as encouraging us to become more active.

Dan Howarth, Head of Care at Diabetes UK, said:

There are many factors that can increase your likelihood of developing type 2 diabetes, such as age, family history and ethnicity. But research shows living with obesity is the single greatest risk factor, accounting for about 80-85% of your risk of developing the condition.

The number of people living with obesity is rising and, with an estimated 13.6 million people in the UK at increased risk of type 2 diabetes, it has never been more vital to support those who are working towards a healthier weight. The Better Health campaign is an important part of the work being done to give people that support, while raising awareness of the benefits of losing weight.

For more information about type 2 diabetes visit diabetes.org.uk.

Dr Aisling McMahon, Executive director: research, innovation and policy at Kidney Research UK, said:

Being overweight or obese can significantly increase the chances of developing type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure both of which are leading causes of kidney disease. In fact, research we funded in partnership with the Medical Research Council has also shown that obesity itself increases the risk of developing kidney disease. With three million people in the UK already living with kidney disease and knowing that levels of obesity are on the increase, this figure could be set to rise rapidly.

Campaigns, like Better Health, are so important to support weight management and healthy lifestyles to protect our kidney health, and there are a number of free resources to get us started.

Better Health has lots of free tips and tools to help people get started if they want to lose weight, eat better or get active; and the site can help you find additional weight loss support. Search 'Better Health'.

Notes to editors:

- The new Better Health full body x-ray animation can be viewed [here](#)
- The six benefits' list has been created based on evidence cited in the Government's Obesity Strategy: "[Tackling Obesity: Empowering adults and children to live healthier lives](#)", alongside NHS and additional sources(3), to provide the public with motivating reasons to eat better and get active in 2022.
- Better Health is working in partnership with 16 weight management and physical activity partners including:
- Physical Activity: Our Parks, Sport England, Better Leisure Centres,

InstructorLive, Anytime Fitness, Pure Gym, Her Spirit

- Weight Management: Slimming World, GetSlim, MAN v FAT Football, WW – Weight Watchers, Second Nature, Healthier for Life, EFL Trust FIT Fans and Noom Weight
- Free, local weight management services are provided by most Local Authorities. Visit the Better Health website to find out more

References

1. Health Survey for England 2019
2. NIHR, Being overweight or obese is linked with heart disease even without other metabolic risk factors,
<https://evidence.nihr.ac.uk/alert/being-overweight-or-obese-is-linked-with-heart-disease-even-without-other-metabolic-risk-factors/>
3. The Obesity Strategy “Tackling Obesity: Empowering adults and children to live healthier lives”
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-obesity-government-strategy/tackling-obesity-empowering-adults-and-children-to-live-healthier-lives> NHS/additional sources
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/high-blood-pressure-hypertension/prevention/> Coronary heart disease – Prevention – NHS (www.nhs.uk) Weight loss and diabetes | Diabetes UK What is diabetes remission and how does it work? | Diabetes UK Research spotlight – putting type 2 diabetes into remission | Diabetes UK
<https://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/resources/patient-information/therapies/physiotherapy/low%20back%20pain%20web.pdf>
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