

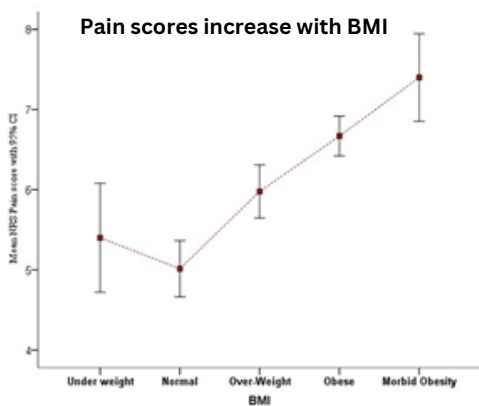
THE EFFECT OF EXCESS BODY WEIGHT ON SPINE PAIN

- A high body mass index (BMI) causes excessive strain on the spine. Increased body weight and abdominal size changes the normal alignment of the spine and increases the mechanical loading through the joints, discs and soft tissues. These changes often cause pain and inactivity. The result can be difficulty managing the activities required for daily living, employment and leisure.
- Any treatment for reducing back pain will have limited benefit while the cause of the pain is still present. One of the most important steps in reducing back pain is weight management.
- Our surgeons will discuss this with you in a compassionate and non-judgmental manner as part of their dedication to providing you with the best care possible.



REDUCING WEIGHT

- Achieving a healthier BMI is likely to improve the symptoms of back pain. Even a small weight loss may lead to a noticeable improvement in your pain.
- Weight loss also reduces the risk of diabetes, hypertension, arthritis, sleep apnea, heart disease, high cholesterol, stroke and some cancers.
- The recommended methods to lose weight include a healthy diet and regular exercise although additional strategies including medication and/or surgery may be required.
- There are many health professionals and community programmes available to assist in weight management, including doctors, dietitians, exercise physiologists, physiotherapists, psychologists/counsellors, exercise groups and support groups.



RESOURCES TO HELP YOU

- Discuss with your GP which approach to weight loss may be right for you and to obtain any referrals required. A dietitian assessment may be a good place to start.
- Our practice nurse can provide information on weight loss including goal setting and referrals to healthcare providers.
- A physiotherapist can assist with exercise for weight loss and to strengthen the muscles that support the spine.
- Please speak to our staff to book an appointment.

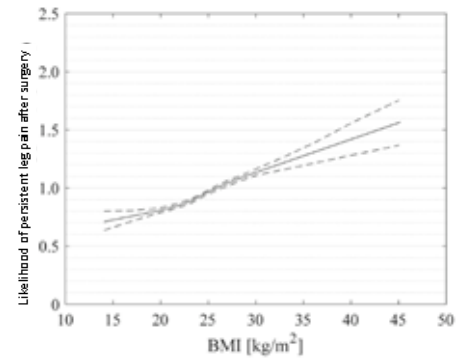


- University of Canberra offers an affordable student-led dietetics service that includes assessment, advice and counselling.
<https://www.canberra.edu.au/health-clinics/clinics-on-offer/nutrition-and-dietetics>
- NSW Health "Healthy Eating Active Living" offers information and coaching.
<https://www.healthyliving.nsw.gov.au/be-healthier>

THE EFFECT OF EXCESS BODY WEIGHT ON SPINE SURGERY

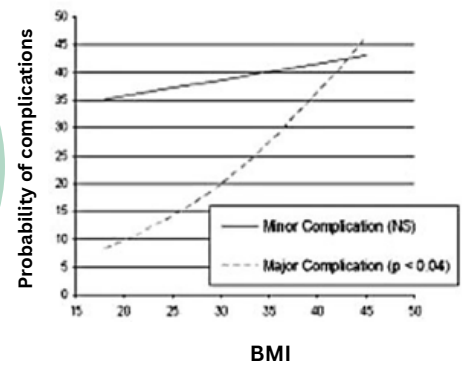
THE EFFECT OF INCREASED BMI ON OUTCOMES OF SURGERY

- Studies have shown that patients with increased BMI have poorer outcomes after spine surgery in terms of resolution of pain symptoms.
- This includes both immediate pain reduction post-operatively as well as pain scores 2 years after surgery.
- For this reason, amongst others, the rates of subsequent and revision surgery is also higher, increasing with BMI.



COMPLICATIONS AFTER SURGERY

- Following surgery, patients with a BMI above the healthy range have higher rates of complications, including deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolus. Superficial wound infections and increased blood loss requiring transfusion are also more common.
- As BMI increases further, there are higher risks of more severe complications such as kidney failure, deep surgical site infections, and sepsis.



PREPARING FOR SURGERY

- Book a preoperative prehab appointment with our nurse to identify any health issues and set some realistic and achievable health goals before and after surgery.
- Aim to start your weight loss before surgery with the goal of continuing after surgery. Even a small weight loss may make your recovery easier.
- Walk as regularly as possible, starting on flat ground then progressing to slopes, increasing your pace and distance over time. Aim to make this a daily ritual.



- Practise some regular functional strengthening exercises provided by our nurse or your physiotherapist prior to surgery. This will improve your ability to move around early after surgery which enhances your recovery and helps to reduce complications after surgery.
- Consider consulting a physiotherapist to maximise your mobility and strength before and after surgery which will assist your recovery and help you to gain the most benefit from your surgery.