

Primary Care Physician Alert

News and Information from MercyOne
specialty care at the Mason City Clinic

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World-class specialty care close to home in
Mason City, Albert Lea and surrounding areas

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Are Primary Care Providers Equipped to Fight the Epidemic of Obesity Alone?

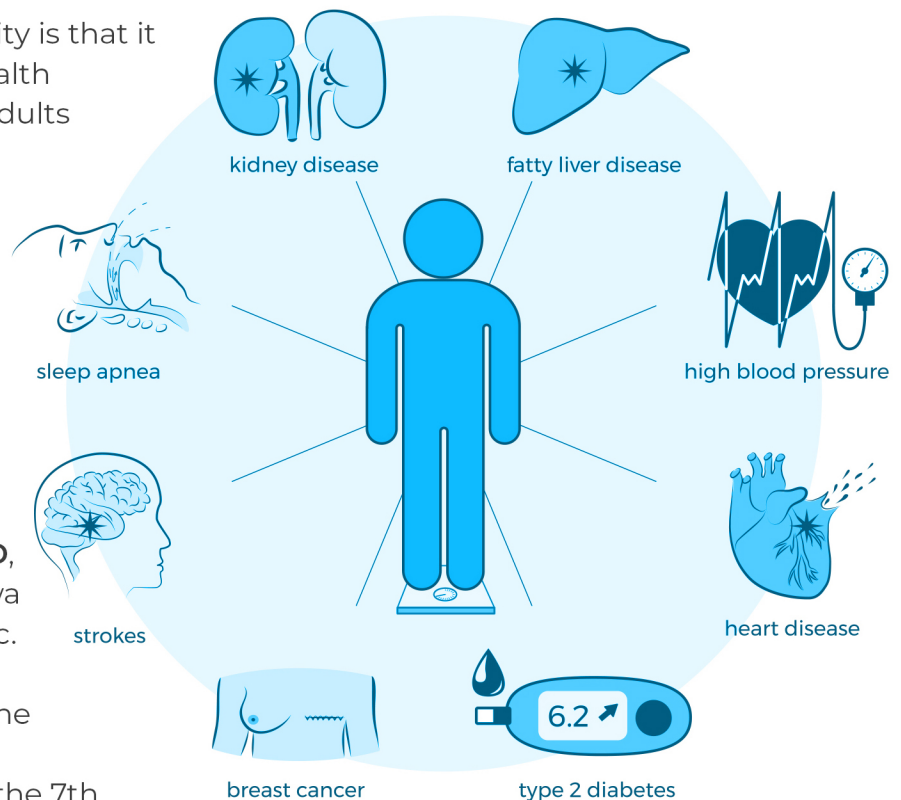
Obesity is multi-faceted. Shouldn't its treatment be?

No longer considered a cosmetic issue caused by overeating and a lack of self-control, the *World Health Organization (WHO)* now recognizes obesity as a chronic progressive disease resulting from multiple environmental and genetic factors.

What is most troubling about obesity is that it brings about other medical and health problems, and disease. Obesity in adults is associated with at least 60 co-morbidities.

"Obesity increases the risk for numerous diseases of the cardiovascular system such as coronary artery disease, pulmonary hypertension, heart failure, blood clots, strokes as well as arrhythmias, specifically atrial fibrillation," said **Denisa Hagau, MD**, cardiologist at MercyOne North Iowa Cardiology Care at Mason City Clinic.

Approximately 2 out of 5 adults in the United States are living with the consequences of obesity. Iowa has the 7th highest obesity rate in nation. In Minnesota, more than 1/3 of adults, ages 45-64, are obese.



Reference: [CDC's Adult Obesity Prevalence Maps, 2020](#)

Beginning September 1, MercyOne North Iowa Bariatric Surgery will relocate for your convenience to **MercyOne North Iowa West, 910 N Eisenhower Ave, Mason City, IA.**
To refer a patient to be evaluated for surgical weight loss call **641-428-2400**

Daniel Lee, MD, ENT physician at MercyOne North Iowa ENT Care at Mason City Clinic said, “**Obesity is one of the most common factors and underlying causes in patients with obstructive sleep apnea. Obesity leads to increased deposition of fat in the neck and tongue leading to increased upper airway obstruction. One of the most effective baseline treatments for obstructive sleep apnea is weight loss.**”

Obesity Is Complex

Although many of these co-morbidities can be improved or eliminated by weight loss, an evaluation of a large primary care database in the United States cited in *JAMA Internal Medicine*, found that “only 20% of patients were diagnosed with obesity and only 40% of those patients were given an obesity management plan.”



In a *Med City News Op-Ed*, Shantaur Gaur, MD, states, “Physicians are strapped for time often having just 15 minutes to evaluate a person struggling with weight issues and don’t always have the resources to assess the specific causes and challenges each individual is facing when it comes to weight.”

According to the *CDC*, “The conditions in which we live, work and play — called social determinants of health also matter. Childcare and school environments, community design, access to healthy affordable foods and beverages and access to safe and convenient places for physical activity affect an individual’s ability to make healthy choices.”

For example, in home environments obesity clusters among family members (spouses, kids, grandparents) making individual lifestyle changes difficult. Workplaces may not accommodate healthy eating options and sedentary jobs may limit opportunities for physical activity. Also many neighborhoods are ‘food deserts’ with a lack of access to affordable and nutritious foods.

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What Are Some Solutions for Effectively Addressing and Treating Obesity



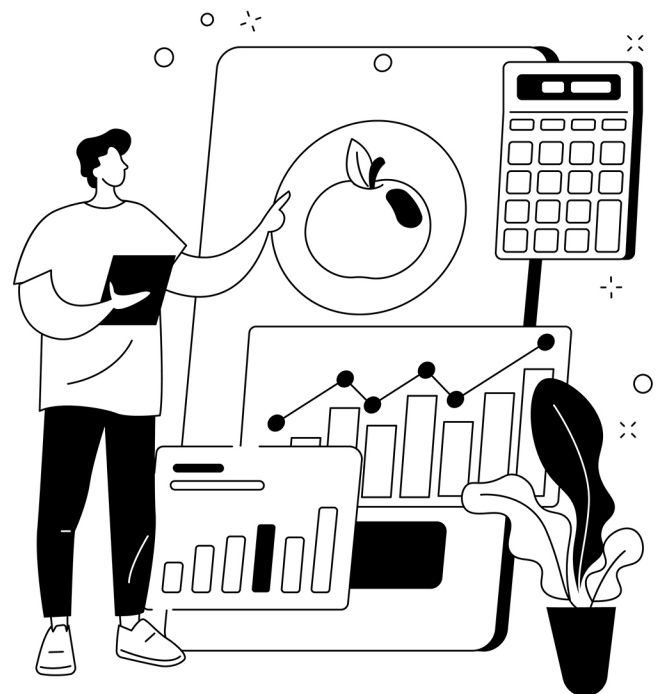
In *Med City News* Dr. Gaur theorizes that personalized obesity treatments is what many doctors think will work but they need more data - demographic, behavioral, environmental, socioeconomic - to piece together which combinations of solutions work for which type of people.

Primary care setting interventions (monitoring and discussing patient's weight, providing options for weight loss management, and medications, making a referral for bariatric surgery) is the best first line of defense for people with obesity, but will have limited sustainability if they are not integrated and supported by complementary actions of other settings.

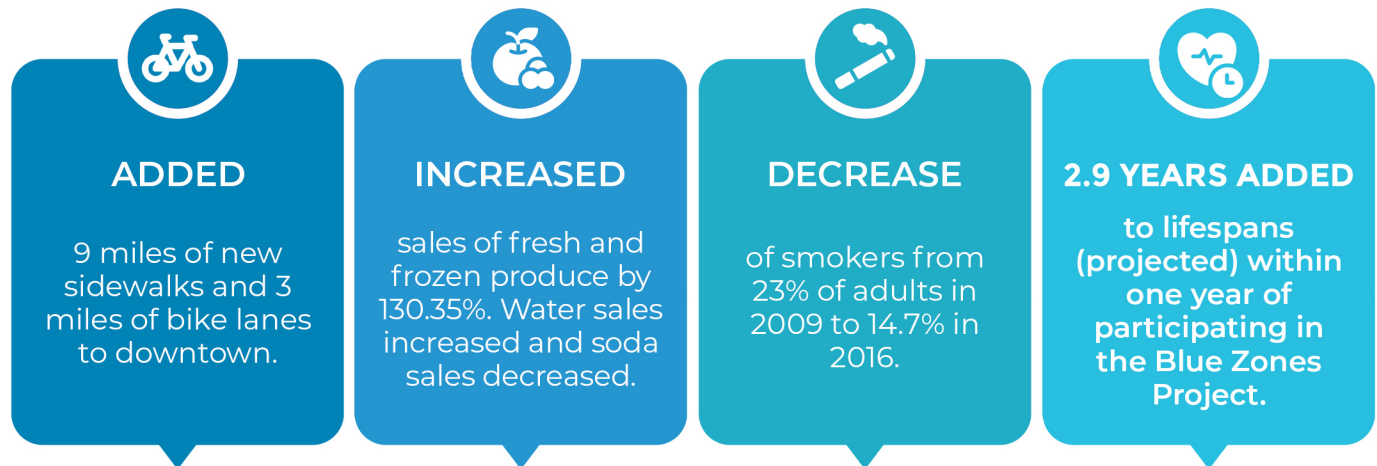
A multilevel approach to obesity prevention and treatment can combine the unique strengths of the healthcare setting with the complementary resources of home, work and community.

A good example of how a community can come to together around wellness goals is the **Blue Zones Project**. Both Mason City, IA and Albert Lea, MN. became Blue Zones where residents and businessowners alike focused on improving well-being for themselves and their neighbors, together lowering rates of obesity, smoking and chronic diseases to create a healthier, happier place to live, work, and play.

In Mason City overall wellbeing of residence improved by 2.6% according to the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index.



For Albert Lea some of the results over a seven year period include:



Weight Loss Surgery Helped A Fort Dodge Man Lose 100 Pounds, Bring His High Blood Pressure To Normal, and Eliminate Knee Pain

In 2020, Scott, 54, of Fort Dodge, at 5'8" weighed 342 lbs., and his blood pressure was so high his primary care doctor, **Alan Nguyen, DO**, at the Van Diest Medical Center in Ft. Dodge told him he was at high risk for a stroke. Scott also had extreme knee pain. Today Scott weighs 213 lbs., his blood pressure is normal, and all of his knee pain is gone.

"It was the visit to the doctor when they told me my blood pressure was 212/110 (normal 120/85) that got me serious about losing the weight. I want to be around for my kids and grandkids."

Married for 33 years, Scott is a father of five, grandfather of four, and a production

supervisor in a print shop. At 5'8", a normal weight is around 170 - 190 lbs.

"When I got married in 1989, I weighed 190 lbs. Then I broke two of my legs in an accident which had me immobile for awhile. I was also not the healthiest eater so the weight just kept coming on. I nearly doubled my weight over three decades."

Scott was referred by Dr. Nguyen to **Gregory Grimberg, MD**, bariatric surgeon at MercyOne North Iowa Cardiology specialty at the Mason City Clinic. "Dr. Grimberg gave me my options of surgery, but also didn't sugar coat the commitment I needed to have leading up to surgery and after surgery of changing my lifestyle."

Scott got a gastric bypass which is a weight loss surgery in which the stomach is divided into two sections. One is a small upper pouch, which is connected to the small intestine so that during a small meal, food bypasses the stomach and causes a full, satisfied feeling. The second is the bypassed part of the stomach, which is left intact and may be used in the future if needed.

“For the first month after the surgery I was on a strict diet of liquids only and then transitioned into solids. I have had to learn to eat smaller portions and slower. There has been some real discomfort in eating and swallowing, but it is getting better and better. And the good news is that I have lost 100 pounds in 8 months.”

“Before the surgery, my tank was always on empty. Even to bend over and tie my shoes was a huge effort and I would get shortness of breath. My wife would ask me to help her in the garden, and the process of getting down on the ground and back up was so difficult and painful that I didn’t want to do it. Even with golfing, which I love, to reach down and get the ball out of the cup left me breathless.”

“I have not had a soda or pop in 1 1/2 yrs., I stay away from fried foods; I don’t eat much bread and have completely eliminated pasta. I eat alot of green vegetables and fruit.”

“I am now buying 36 waist pants, my wife and I regularly walk our dog, and I am in the process of purchasing an e-bike for exercise.”

“The response from my family and community has been really good. During Covid we would go to church over Zoom so all people could see was my head. When I walked into church after 2 years, people didn’t even recognize me.”

“I have had follow ups with Dr. Grimberg, and the nurse and nutritionist who have been very helpful to me post surgery. “

Before



After



[Click here to see the Bariatric Surgery web page](#) where patients can also register for a bariatric surgery consult and join our online support group.

Mother Of Four and Special Education Teacher Loses 100 Pounds Through Gastric Bypass Surgery, and Feels Happier Than Ever

Clear Lake resident and schoolteacher **Lisa Buss**, 56, reached a high of 280 pounds. Said Lisa, "When I was younger, I was able to eat anything and not gain weight. Then as I got older and had my kids, I started getting heavier and it was very hard for me to lose the weight on my own."

After gastric bypass surgery and changing her eating habits, Lisa is now 180 lbs., well onto her goal of 150 lbs. "More than the weight loss, I am just a happier person now," said Lisa.

"Before the surgery I had high blood pressure and acid reflux disease. The day after the surgery I stopped taking the Prilosec for acid reflex and the high blood pressure medication," said Lisa.

"I now have a size 14 (blouse) that is too big. I haven't worn a size 14 for 28 years. I am relieved to not shop in the Plus Women stores anymore."

Said Lisa, "My mentor at Clear Lake Elementary school said to me 'You used to come into my office with your hand on your stomach and completely out of breath. I was worried you were going to have a heart attack. Now you look like you feel so much better and happier.'"

"I haven't eaten bread, potatoes, rice or pasta in six months. Six weeks after surgery I was going to the gym and lifting. I can now do squats with a 30-pound weight in my hand," said Lisa.

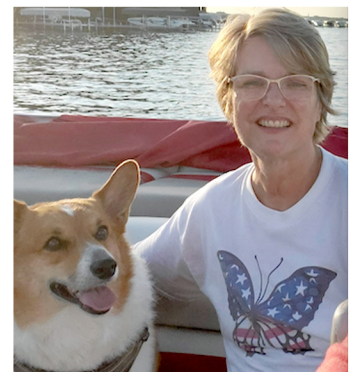
"My primary care provider **Brianne Neuberger, PA-C** at the Ackley Medical Center in Ackley, Iowa was the first person to suggest weight loss surgery to me and recommended I talk to **Dr. Matthew Fabian**, a bariatric surgeon at MercyOne North Iowa Bariatric Surgery Specialty at the Mason City Clinic. During my first consultation he asked lots of questions about my health history, and I talked with the dietician and nutritionist as well who continue to be part of my post-surgery care team. I have had no complications from the surgery," said Lisa.

"Every time I see my daughter she says, 'you are smaller than last time I saw you.' My husband says he is proud of me."



Before vs After

"More than the weight loss, I am just a happier person now"



In This Issue Learn More About:



The importance and complexities of treating obesity in patients, and how to bring our resources together to tackle this epidemic in our workplaces, homes and neighborhoods.



The story of a **Fort Dodge 54-year-old** man's journey to lose significant weight through gastric bypass surgery, and how it has transformed him from being at risk of stroke with severe arthritis in his knees to being an active and healthy member of his family and community.



How a **Clear Lake mother and teacher** lost 100 pounds through bariatric surgery and is happier than she has ever been, and off all medications for acid reflux disease and high blood pressure.



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