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Obesity: Looking Beyond Willpower and the Weighing Scale

For decades, weight management was reduced to a seemingly simple equation: eat less and move more.

We now understand that obesity is considerably more complex.

Body weight is influenced by biological, genetic, metabolic, hormonal, environmental and behavioural factors. This is why people can struggle with weight despite repeated and genuine attempts to lose it.

Understanding the Body's Resistance to Weight Loss

When weight is lost, the body can respond with changes that favour weight regain. Hunger, satiety, energy expenditure and other biological mechanisms can make maintaining a lower weight challenging.

This helps explain why losing weight and maintaining that loss are not simply questions of motivation.

Weight Is Only One Part of Health

BMI and body weight provide useful information, but they do not tell the whole story.

Waist circumference, glucose regulation, blood pressure, cholesterol, fatty liver and obesity-related health conditions can provide a more complete picture of the impact of excess weight on health.

The Role of Medical Weight Management

A medical approach considers the factors contributing to weight gain, associated health conditions, previous attempts at weight loss and the individual's overall metabolic health.

Treatment may include nutrition and physical activity strategies, behavioural and lifestyle interventions, treatment of associated conditions and evidence-based anti-obesity medication when clinically appropriate.

Success Is More Than Reaching an "Ideal Weight"

Even clinically meaningful weight reduction can improve glucose regulation, blood pressure, cholesterol, fatty liver, mobility and physical function.

The goal should therefore be **better health and sustainable weight management**, rather than pursuing an arbitrary number on the weighing scale.

Key Takeaway

Obesity is a chronic medical condition. Effective treatment should address biology, metabolic health and long-term weight maintenance—not blame or willpower.