

# 38% Obese In Western India Fine The Way They Are, Not Going For Weight Loss

Malathy Iyer | TNN

The main problem with the obesity time-bomb ticking in India is the people's attitude, say experts. There is a lack of awareness about the biochemistry of fat — the peculiar 'Indian fat', for instance, is different from that found in Caucasians and very difficult to metabolize — and its co-relation to serious diseases.

A new 11-city survey in India shows almost 63% of overweight north Indians and 38% western Indians interviewed weren't pursuing any weight loss options because they were happy the way they were. In southern Indian, approximately half of those interviewed said they didn't have time to pursue weight loss programmes. In Kolkata, the surveyed overweight persons said they just couldn't stick to a routine. Only a quarter of the respondents had tried dieting.

Endocrinologist Shashank Joshi from Lilavati Hospital said Indians have white fat as against Caucasians who have brown fat. "Indian fat is dangerous because unlike the westerner's fat, it cannot burn down to form energy," he said. During winters, the brown fat that contains mitochondrial cells capable of breaking down the fat, help the Caucasians stay warm. Moreover, nutritional studies in India have shown that Indians tend to store more fat than westerners of the same weight.

The common man is unaware of these subtleties. "People don't understand the need to maintain their weight," said Pune-based bariatric surgeon Shashank Shah. "Obesity is like any other chronic disease that needs lifelong treatment. It's not enough to just lose your excess weight through medicine or exercise. Maintenance is the most difficult part," he added.

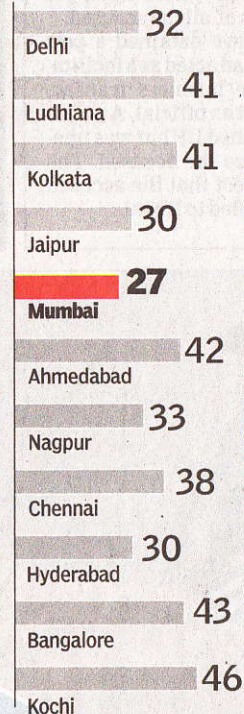
"In spite of being aware of several weight loss options, we find limited takers for those options. While 88% believe that obesity is caused due to eating, we find only 25% practising dieting," said the AC Nielsen survey.

Doctors say people have to be active, exercise regularly and, in extreme cases, even take medicine or opt for surgery to stay healthy. But the survey said only 30% of those interviewed spent a considerable amount on weight loss. On an average, the amount spent on weight loss by any consumer on a duration of say 1.2 years is Rs 10,000.

## IN OVERSIZED INDIA, MUMBAI PULLING ITS WEIGHT

The AC Nielsen 11-city survey on obesity, conducted for a healthcare company, looked at 5,988 households (22,824 persons) in the listing phase. Finally, it studied 1,668 OVERWEIGHT individuals, 870 OBESE people and 78 MORBIDLY OBESE persons

OBSIDITY  
PREVALENCE IN  
THE 11 CITIES  
SURVEYED



POPULATION AFFECTED



PREVALENCE BY AGE GROUPS



INVESTMENT IN WEIGHT LOSS



REASONS FOR NOT DOING ANYTHING CURRENTLY

WEST | Comfortable/happy the way I am 38

SOUTH | Paucity of time 46

EAST  
Cannot stick to routine/ regime 49

NORTH  
Comfortable/happy the way I am 63

CONDITIONS COEXISTING WITH OBESITY

> 80 of obese people suffer from one or the other coexisting condition/illness

condition/illness 53

Acidity/heart burn Cardiovascular/ heart diseases Hypertension Sleep apnea

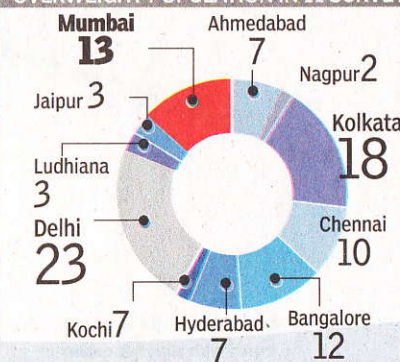
> Only 1/5th believe obesity is the cause of their illness

> Not diagnosed with any coexisting condition/illness 23

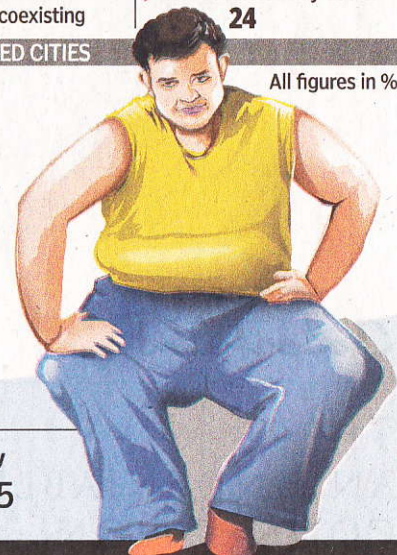
> Diagnosed with at least 1 coexisting

> Not consulted any doctor 24

OVERWEIGHT POPULATION IN 11 SURVEYED CITIES



All figures in %



BMI CLASSIFICATION

Underweight  
below 18.5

Healthy  
18.5-22.9

Overweight  
23-27.4

Obese  
27.5-37.5

Morbidly  
over 37.5

Calculate BMI: Weight in kg divided by height in meters squared (weight (kg) / [height (m)]<sup>2</sup>)