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# **Main Causes of Obesity in Women**

Have you ever wondered what the main causes of obesity in women are?

Perhaps as a teenager you were able to eat whatever you wanted without gaining weight but now that you're in your 30's to 40's plus it seems as though all you have to do is look at food and you gain weight. It seems so unfair. And yes, it's true, younger women are less likely to be overweight than adult women.

But what are the **main causes of obesity in women**?

Well, there are several factors that contribute to the likelihood of obesity in adult women all of which are relatively easy to address once you understand them. The main causes of obesity in women include;

- Hormonal effects.
- Increased metabolic efficiency after childbirth.
- Changing eating habits.
- Reducing activity levels.
- Quitting smoking

Lets examine each of these more closely.

**Hormonal effects:** Hormones affect just about every area of our lives including both physical and emotional. Hormonal imbalances contribute significantly to fluid retention rates, which of course means that middle aged women approaching menopause are more likely to carry excess fluid. Human growth hormone (HGH) levels are lower in obese individuals, HGH also increases the rate at which we burn calories (leaving less calories to be converted to fat). Additionally, the hormone oestrogen helps to determine body fat distribution. Scientific studies indicate that younger women who have higher oestrogen levels tend to carry excess weight around the bottom, hips and thighs (pear shaped figure). Whereas menopausal and postmenopausal women who have lower oestrogen levels tend to have higher percentages of abdominal fat (apple shaped figure). Unfortunately, abdominal fat is a higher risk factor for certain serious health issues including, heart disease, stroke, diabetes 2 (onset), even some forms of arthritis.

**Increased Metabolic efficiency after childbirth:** One of the most powerful factors contributing to female obesity is the increased metabolic efficiency caused by pregnancy and childbirth. Women who have never had children are more likely to have an inefficient metabolism, meaning that a lot of the calories ingested pass unused from the body, this is one of the reasons why people can eat constantly without gaining weight. Unfortunately, pregnancy frequently puts and end to that. Pregnancy kicks the body into high gear. All of a sudden, the food that we consume has to provide for two people rather than just one. So it forces the body to become more efficient in extracting calories from the food we consume. After the birth, the body slows down a little but rarely goes back to pre pregnancy levels. This means that we have less calorie wastage which can in turn contribute to excess fat storage.

**Changing eating habits:** As a pregnancy progresses a woman's calorie intake tends to increase. The reason for this is obvious, the growing fetus requires more nutrients than the mothers diet supplies so appetite increases accordingly. Eating more food slightly increases the size of the stomach which means it requires slightly more food to fill it. More food means more calories of course. After the birth and breastfeeding has ceased, if food intake does not decrease then those extra calories can contribute to extra fat storage. So it's wise to reduce food consumption slightly in order to allow the stomach to shrink again.

**Reducing activity levels:** Young women tend to be more active than more mature women. They will go out dancing and partying all weekend, think nothing of only receiving three or four hours sleep per night etc. Motherhood seriously affects the ability so have a social life like that so mothers become less physically active. As the children mature into their teenage years the energy levels of their mother is tending to decrease so the

level of activity that was possible when she was 20 is no longer possible and then as they mature further health issues contribute to a further slowing of physical activity. This tendency toward an increasingly sedentary lifestyle is another contributing factor to obesity.

Quitting smoking: While certainly not exclusive to women (either young or mature) this can be a huge contributing factor and therefore is worthwhile mentioning. When I quit smoking I gained a massive 45 pounds over nine months. The reason for this is quite simple. Smoking is a hand to mouth habit. There are very few hand to mouth habits available. In fact, there are only two... eating and drinking! It's only natural that a person who quits smoking will have a deep psychological need to replace the hand to mouth habit of smoking for another hand to mouth habit. Unfortunately, the habit most usually picked is eating, and more specifically, snacking... usually on unhealthy foods like cakes, candy, sweets etc. Is it any wonder that there is a weight blow out?

Thankfully, understanding this makes it possible to avoid the trend. There are other things you can do that will meet the hand to mouth habit without you gaining weight. These things include;

- Sugar free gum & sweets
- Keep a glass of water on hand at all times - reach for water instead of food!
- Suck on an ice cream stick or toothpick

There are many other factors that can contribute to obesity in mature women as this list is certainly not exhaustive. However, this post was designed to provide a basic look at some of the main causes of obesity in women.

You can also find this article published on [Main Causes of Obesity in Women](#)