

Help Prevent Diabetes. **Treat Obesity.**

In 2024, diabetes and obesity remain significant health issues in the United States. While millions struggle with diabetes, the comorbid condition of obesity affects 42% of U.S. adults.¹ What's true nationwide is especially true in Arkansas. Treating the chronic disease of obesity can help prevent or delay type 2 diabetes and may even result in diabetes remission.

Arkansas Obesity Epidemic

- Approximately 1.2 million adults in Arkansas, or 40% of the adult population, have obesity.²
- 35% of AR adults ages 65 and older have obesity.²
- The AR adult obesity rate is projected to increase to 51% by 2030.³

Obesity in the U.S.

- Roughly 42% (110 million) of American adults are affected by obesity.⁴
- Nearly 15 million children and adolescents in the U.S. are affected by obesity.⁵
- Almost 500,000 annual deaths are attributable to excess weight.⁶
- Nationwide, one in three young adults between the ages of 17 and 24 cannot qualify for military service due to overweight status.⁷

The Costly Consequences of Obesity

- Health care expenses from obesity in AR are estimated to cost the state nearly \$4.6 billion annually.⁸
- Obesity-related medical costs in the United States are estimated to be nearly \$173 billion each year.⁴
- On average, out-of-pocket costs have increased 37% over the last decade for people with large employer coverage who have an obesity diagnosis.⁹

Person-Centered Treatment for Obesity

The *Standards of Care in Diabetes—2025* of the American Diabetes Association® recommends person-centered interventions across the care continuum to ensure comprehensive support for those affected. Proven and effective treatments exist to treat and manage obesity, but health insurance and federal and state programs do not allow access to these science-based approaches.¹⁰ Addressing the obesity epidemic involves a multifaceted approach to support improved health, including:

- **Screening and prevention:** Screen for obesity by documenting height, weight, waist circumference, and BMI. If needed, annual screening for obesity-related comorbidities.
- **Intensive behavioral therapy (IBT):** Offer intensive lifestyle modification program that includes personalized nutrition, physical activity, and behavioral support with a trained professional.
- **Pharmacotherapy:** Provide access to approved obesity medications according to FDA guidelines.
- **Bariatric surgery:** Provide access to bariatric/metabolic surgery as recommended by an appropriate health care professional.

Sources:

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