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## Obesity and Your Feet

Obesity is an ever-increasing problem in American society. Currently, up to one third of the U.S. population is considered obese, defined as a body mass index greater than 30. Although it seems obvious, many studies have found a direct link between increased BMI and foot problems. Not only is there an increased risk of wear-and-tear problems (such as arthritis, tendonitis and heel pain), but also an increased risk of developing type II diabetes. As little as one pound above your ideal weight can increase pressure in your hips, knees and ankles by as much as eight pounds. Simply walking up a flight of stairs or up an incline can increase pressure on the ankle by four to six times. Weight control can be an essential component to alleviate foot pain.


Your foot and ankle surgeon can be your biggest advocate in losing weight. A surgical procedure, such as gastric banding or gastric bypass, may be desired to help obesity. Often, the surgeon will require a large amount of weight loss (40 to 100+ lbs) before surgery is performed. In addition to diet modification, exercise, such as walking, is encouraged. This can be difficult with foot pain. A foot and ankle surgeon can advise on shoe selection, stretching and even orthotics to keep you walking and help you reach your goals.

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Printed from [FootHealthFacts.org](#), the patient education website of the  **American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons®**