

[IMAGE]

Heart Failure Risk Doubled in Obese

Very obese people have been shown to face a much higher risk for heart failure than people of normal weight. With more and more Americans considered overweight or obese, the authors of a recent study in *The New England Journal of Medicine* wanted to determine if being overweight to a lesser degree also puts a person at a greater risk for heart failure.

Using body-mass index (BMI) to classify a person's weight, almost 6,000 people were divided into one of three categories: normal weight, overweight, or obese. Incidence of heart failure was compared among the groups, who averaged 55 years old.

Overweight women were 50% more likely to experience heart failure than women of normal weight, based on an average of 14 years of follow-up. Obese women and men were approximately twice as likely to have heart failure. The risk for heart failure rose consistently for both genders as BMI increased, regardless of other factors like smoking, alcohol consumption, or age.

To figure out your BMI, multiply your weight (in lbs.) by 703, then divide twice by your height (in inches). Normal weight is considered a BMI of 18.5 to 25; "overweight," 25 to 30; and over 30 is considered "obese."

This measure of "healthy" weight has been criticized, however, as some people who work out regularly and are dense with muscle may be healthy despite a high BMI.

Reference:

Kenchiah S, Evans JC, Levy D, et al. Obesity and the risk of heart failure. *The New England Journal of Medicine* 2002;347(5), pp. 305-313.

To read more about general health, go to <http://www.chiroweb.com/find/archives/general>.

Page printed from:

http://www.toyourhealth.com/mpacms/tyh/article.php?id=805&no_paginate=true&no_b=true