



## Severe Obesity Stand-alone High-Risk Factor for Heart Failure



A new study by Johns Hopkins researchers found that even after accounting for such risk factors as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes, so-called morbid obesity appears to stand alone as a standout risk for heart failure, but not for other major types of heart disease. The report is published in the [Journal of the American Heart Association](#).

The U.S. Federal Government estimates that approximately one in three Americans is obese and over five percent are morbidly obese. The CDC reports that almost 6 million people in the US are living with heart failure. Patients with heart failure have a 50 percent mortality rate five years after diagnosis.

According to the findings from the Hopkins study, morbidly obese individuals are more than two times more likely to have heart failure as compared to people who have a healthy BMI after accounting for factors such as high blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels. However, the researchers caution that while their findings suggest a link between severe obesity and heart failure, it does not outline a definite cause and effect.

In any case, findings from the study suggest that simply treating hypertension, diabetes and other associated conditions may not be sufficient to prevent coronary heart disease and stroke and may not be enough to prevent the increased risk of heart failure. Weight loss is thus the only foolproof preventive measure available to these individuals and the use of both [exercise and healthy eating](#) is imperative to tackle it

"Obesity in our study has emerged as one of the least explained and likely most challenging risk factors for heart failure because there is no magic pill to treat it, no drugs that can easily address the problem like there are for high cholesterol and high blood pressure," says [Chiadi Ndumele, MD, MHS](#), assistant professor of medicine and member of the Ciccarone Center for the Prevention of Heart Disease at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. "Even with diet and exercise, people struggle to lose weight and keep it off, and for the morbidly obese, the struggle is often insurmountable."

Dr Ndumele explains that there is definite evidence to suggest that extra body weight results in a higher metabolic demand on the heart. In addition, fat cells in our abdomen release molecules that are toxic to heart cells. Obesity is thus a high-risk factor for heart failure and should be taken seriously as this is essential for

reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Source: [Journal of the American Heart Association](#)

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