

**Dietitian Tip August
Tuesday 25/20**

Do I Need To Be Weighed At My Medical Appointment?

Stepping on the scale can be a stressful and anxious experience. For some people, especially those with a history of dieting, eating disorders, and poor body image, knowing the number on the scale can be more harmful than helpful. There are times when it may be important for your healthcare provider to know your weight, but there may also be times where knowing your weight is not important.

Find more information on nutrition and healthy eating at
www.grandeprairiepcn.com/resources/dietitiantip



When It Is Helpful

1. Medication dosing. It is important to have an accurate weight for medication doses that are based on weight.
2. Monitoring patients with chronic diseases such as cancer, kidney, or liver disease.
3. If you have noticed significant weight gain or loss. This may be indicative of a medical issue.
4. Monitoring growth in children.

When It Is Not Helpful

1. For concerns that are not weight related, such as strep throat or a sprained ankle (except if weight is required for medication dosing).
2. If knowing your weight may trigger thoughts of disordered eating or poor body image.
3. If your healthcare provider is not able to explain why weight is relevant to your care.
4. If you do not feel comfortable being weighed.

Your Rights As A Patient

You have the right to say “no” to getting weighed at medical appointments. You may also ask your healthcare provider to make a note in your medical chart stating that you do not want to be weighed.

The 2020 Canadian Adult Obesity Clinical Practice Guidelines recommend that healthcare providers ask patient permission before taking anthropometric measurements (including weight) or discussing weight.

How To Tell Your Healthcare Provider That You Do Not Want To Be Weighed And/Or Know Your Weight

“Can you explain why knowing my weight is important today?”

“Could I not be weighed today, please?”

“I would prefer to not discuss my weight today.”

“I haven’t gained or lost a significant amount of weight recently.”

“Instead of weight, I’d like to use other measures of health like lab work and blood pressure.”

“If it is necessary to know my weight, I would prefer to face away from the scale, and please don’t tell me my weight.”

“I’d rather not be weighed right now, but if it is necessary that my weight is required for a medication dose, I will be weighed then.”

References

Wharton, S., Lau, D.C.W., Vallis, M., Sharma, A.M., Biertho, L.... Wicklum, S. (2020). Obesity in adults: a clinical practice guideline. CMAJ, 192(31), E875-891.

Puhl, R.M., Suh, Y. Weight bias in clinical care: Improving health care for patient with overweight and obesity. Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at UConn.