

Talking about Weight

Tips for discussing weight with your doctor

Introduction

Speaking to your doctor about weight can be daunting - sharing personal details about your life, eating habits and body. Those who live with excess weight inevitably face negative attitudes and stereotypes related to their appearance, from themselves and others. This, weight bias, can prevent people from getting the best care and treatment.

Obesity is not a lifestyle issue or personal choice. The oversimplified view that all we must do is "Eat less, Move more" does not address the complex underlying causes of obesity.

We must empower people to start the conversation about weight. We must fight weight bias/stigma and advocate for safe, effective and sustainable treatments for obesity.

Obesity is a Disease

Obesity is a disease caused by genetics, then brain/nervous system and hormones, influenced by our environment.

**Obesity is NOT
your fault!**



Before the Consultation

- Consider Obesity as a real & treatable disease
- Book a visit specifically to discuss weight
- Highlight weight as the topic for discussion
- Be prepared - have a list of questions/concerns
- Consider bringing support
- Consider your past history/pattern of weight change
- Consider Triggers/Factors that influence your weight
- Think about previous weight loss attempts
- Bring a list of current medications
- Think about reasons for wanting to lose weight
- Have realistic expectations of the encounter

What is a Successful Consultation for You?

- Open a dialogue with your doctor about weight
- Gather information from your doctor
- Share information about your experiences, concerns and expectations relating to weight
- Assessment for complications of obesity
- Reassurance about health
- Learn about treatments - safety, effectiveness
- Learn about medications that may help
- Referral to a specialist clinic
- Develop a personal weight management strategy

Would you Consider?

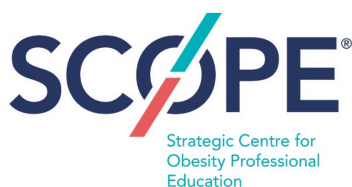
“Would you consider that past weight loss efforts were difficult, NOT because of some flaw in your character or lack of strength, motivation or willpower or wrong diet or not being active enough. Would you consider that when you struggle with weight you are struggling, untreated, with a real medical condition?”

“Each of us inherits a unique appetite system, centred in a brain, that evolved for a time when calories could be scarce. Now we are surrounded by an environment that is filled with ultra-processed, ultra-portioned and ultra-available food. In this “Obesogenic” environment, those with genetic vulnerability will naturally struggle with weight.”

David Macklin MD CCFPC
Director, Medcan Weight Management Program



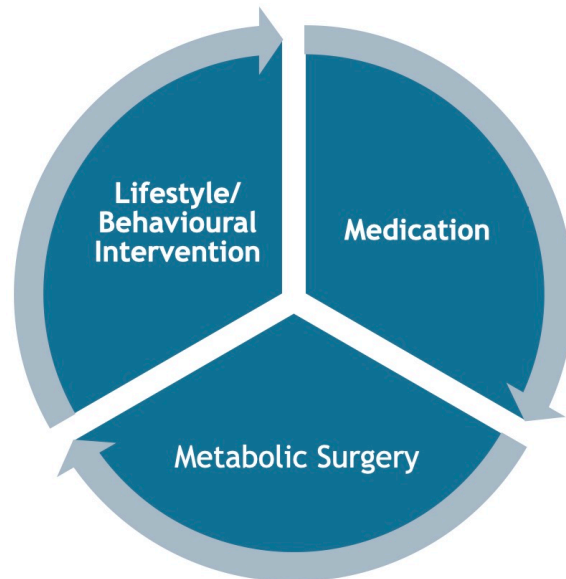
Dr Michael Crotty is a SCOPE certified GP who specialises in Bariatric Medicine.



During the Consultation

- Ask about your doctors comfort discussing weight
- Explore previous positive/negative experiences discussing weight
- “Ice breaker”: media coverage raising awareness of obesity as a chronic disease
- Avoid self critical, negative and stigmatizing language - your weight is not your fault!
- Discuss words you are comfortable/uncomfortable with using when discussing weight
- Inform the doctor if you are comfortable having your weight checked
- Be prepared for possible blood pressure check, physical examination and blood tests
- Ask about referral to other services & treatments
- Make a plan for follow up

Evidence Based Treatments



General advice when discussing weight

- Don't make assumptions based on someones weight
- Don't Shame or Blame people
- Ask Permission (Time and Place) to discuss weight
- Don't offer “helpful” weight loss tips/comments
- Be supportive and encouraging
- Focus on Health Gain and not Weight Loss