



## **WEIGHT AND YOUR FERTILITY**

### **Definitions**

An overweight or obese person has excess body fat. Women store most of their body fat in the midsection that includes the abdomen, hips and thighs. The measurement of overall body fat is determined by calculation of Body Mass Index (BMI) and waist measurement. BMI measures body weight relative to height to determine total body fat content in adults. BMI is a better indicator of total body fat than weight alone.

Normal Weight BMI 19-24

Overweight BMI 25-29

Obese BMI 30-39

Extreme Obesity 40 and greater

(Your doctor can calculate your BMI for you. You can also log on to our website, [www.genesisfertility.com](http://www.genesisfertility.com) for more information on BMI and calculating your BMI.)

### **Fertility Concerns with Obesity**

- Irregular periods
- Increased risk of Infertility
- Increased risk of miscarriage
- Decreased success of fertility treatments

### **Menstrual Cycles and Ovulation**

Most women who are overweight have normal menstrual cycles and fertility.

In some overweight women, weight may contribute to irregular periods and infertility due to ovulatory dysfunction. For these women weight loss (even weight loss of 5-10% of body weight) may dramatically improve ovulation rates, making periods more regular and will increase fertility and pregnancy rates.

### **Fertility Treatment Success**

Women who are overweight require higher doses of fertility medications. They also have fewer eggs retrieved when undergoing IVF and a lower pregnancy rate.

Women who are overweight are at higher risk for surgical complications during fertility surgery.

To optimize success of fertility treatments, your goal weight should be in the normal BMI range (19-24).

### **Potential Pregnancy Complications with Obesity**

- Increased risk of miscarriage
- Increased risk of high blood pressure
- Increased risk of diabetes in pregnancy
- Increased risk of birth defects
- Increased risk of high birth weight infant
- Increased risk of Cesarean section

In addition to decreasing your fertility, being obese poses risks to you and your pregnancy once you become pregnant.

**Reproductive Benefits of weight loss include:**

- Menstrual regularity
- Increased success rates with infertility treatments resulting in pregnancy due to improved hormonal response to treatment.
- Decreased risk of long-term complications including diabetes, cardiovascular disease and pregnancy related complications.

**Policy at GENESIS**

1. We recommend weight loss, to a BMI of less than 30, for all women trying to conceive. However, if you are obese, even a 10% weight loss can increase your fertility. Ideally, for the best possible outcome of your fertility treatments and your future pregnancy, your goal BMI should be 19-24.

2. Women, whose BMI exceeds 40, and are seeking fertility therapy, may be asked to see a high risk obstetrician or MFM before starting treatment.

3. To undergo IVF treatment at Genesis, your BMI needs to be less than 35. This is to ensure your safety and health while undergoing anesthesia.

---

*Your doctor is providing you with this information because of her/his concern that your weight will adversely impact your ability to successfully conceive and deliver a healthy baby.*

---

For more information, please review our Nutritional Guidelines handout.