

Nutrition and Spinecare

Reducing Back Pain with Optimum Weight Control

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Managing weight through a balanced diet, sound nutrition, and regular exercise will help reduce existing back pain and also help prevent recurrent back pain. Overweight and obese patients are exposed to increased risk for disc degeneration and spinal joint osteoarthritis. Individuals who have a high body mass index (BMI) place additional strain on the spinal joints (facets). The excess weight can contribute to joint membrane inflammation (synovitis), cartilage disruption and arthritis. Weight loss is a recommended adjunctive goal for individuals with spinal osteoarthritis and osteoporosis.

Recovery from back surgery is influenced by a patient's body mass index and weight. Obese patients have a higher risk of complications and infections from surgery than non-obese patients. Overweight individuals are at greater risk for scar tissue (fibrosis) development due to greater loading and strain placed upon post-operative inflamed areas. They also tend to be less capable or motivated to participate in a progressive post-operative rehabilitation. Overweight or obese patients should consider losing weight prior to any elective (non-emergency) back surgery to help reduce the risk for complications and future back problems.