

ht think!

WITH 30 MILLION OF INDIA'S ADULT POPULATION OVERWEIGHT AND OBESE, WEIGHT-LOSS SURGERY IS GROWING AT 8% ANNUALLY

SIZE MATTERS

Weight-loss surgery has grown threefold over the past three years, with diabetics and overfed teens fuelling the boom



WATCH THAT WEIGHT!

Body Mass Index (BMI) is an indicator of healthy weight

BMI = Weight (kg) / Height (metres) x Height (metres)

- BMI CUT-OFFS**
- <18.5 kg/m²: Underweight
 - 18.5 kg/m² to 24.9 kg/m²: Normal
 - 25 kg/m² to 29.9 kg/m²: Overweight
 - >30 kg/m²: Obese

- STOMACH BYPASS SURGERY**
- Bariatric surgery triggers weight loss in the very obese — BMI of more than 35 — if diet and exercise fail
 - The surgery is done laparoscopically through four ports in the abdomen
 - Patients lose 6-8 kg a month
 - Weight stabilizes at 10% more than the ideal weight after surgery.

- POTENTIAL SIDE-EFFECTS**
- Vomiting, from eating too much
 - Pouch leaking, needs revision surgery
 - Anaemia, osteoporosis from nutritional deficiencies
 - Gallbladder attacks, if weight loss happens quickly
 - Gastritis (inflamed stomach lining), heartburn

CASE STUDIES

ANIL WADHWA, 53
Lost 72 kg
Before surgery: 186 kg
Current weight 114 kg
Health benefit: Mobile after six years in bed, no high BP, no back pain, less joint pain, better diabetes control



ARCHANA MALIK, 56
Lost 41 kg
Before surgery: 105 kg
Current weight: 64 kg
Health benefit: Cholesterol down, no aches and pain, higher energy



often no choice but to operate," says Dr Lakkadawala, who's youngest patient is 13. "He weighed 160 kg, had uncontrolled hypertension, diabetes, sleep apnea and dyslipidemia, but since he met the skeletal mass parameters, I operated. He's lost more than 50 kg," says Lakkadawala.

The skeletons of obese adolescents are usually more dense than those of normal weight teens, but return to normal within two years after gastric bypass surgery, reported US researchers in March at ENDO 2015, the annual meeting of the Endocrine Society in San Diego. Dr Chowbey's youngest patient was a 13-year-old weighing 154 kg, with severe asthma and breathing problems. He now weighs 91 kg.

LESS IS GOOD
Sunita Gupta, 43, underwent bariatric surgery last week at Max Hospital to control her galloping weight, which was a staggering 119.6 kg for her 5-foot frame. "I can barely walk, I can't get clothes my size. I don't go out," says the mother of two. Gupta hopes surgery will fix her high blood pressure, osteoarthritis, hypothyroidism, distorted joints, varicose veins and disrupted sleep. Her target weight is 69.4 kg, which she hopes to reach by the year end.

Archana Malik, 56, weighs 65 kg after undergoing surgery three years ago. "My weight's not ideal, but I'm happy," says Malik, who weighed 105 kg in 2012. "I put on weight after my girls were born and though I tried crazy amounts of diets, my cholesterol stayed high, my weight was horrendous and I had aches and pains," says the Gurgaon-resident.

After surgery, she's happier than she's been in years. "The first six months were tricky, I was unsure about how much to eat, but now my life has turned," says Malik. "I absolutely recommend it to everybody."

DISEASE CONTROL
"It's not a shortcut to weight loss but a treatment for obesity-related diseases such as hypertension, arthritis, dyslipidemia (high cholesterol and blood fats), acid reflux, sleep disorders and diabetes," says Dr Chowbey.

Long-term data from 150 patients operated in Delhi between 2006 and 2009 shows surgery helped control diabetes in 88.4%, lower hypertension in 58%, increase heart-protecting good cholesterol (HDL) in 93%, and triglycerides in 82.1%.

Before his surgery in 2012, Anil Wadhwa, 53, weighed 186 kg and had diabetes, high blood pressure, chronic back pain and rheumatoid arthritis. "I was bedridden for six years, anything would have been an improvement over the life I was leading," says Wadhwa. He was in luck. He lost 72 kg after surgery and now weighs 114 kg.

Bariatric surgery is done laparoscopically, with the surgeon operating through four small incisions in the abdomen. It costs ₹2-3 lakh, including three days of hospital stay. After surgery, most people begin to lose an average of 6-8 kg a month, usually stopping when they are about 10% higher than their healthy weight. The weight loss is permanent.

YOUNG ONES
Over the past year, the numbers of teens undergoing surgery has shot up. "We're getting bigger teenagers with obesity-related diseases and there's

BARIATRIC SURGERY IS NOT A SHORTCUT TO WEIGHT LOSS BUT A TREATMENT FOR OBESITY-RELATED DISEASES SUCH AS HYPERTENSION, DIABETES, ARTHRITIS, HIGH CHOLESTEROL AND SLEEP DISORDERS, AMONG OTHERS

DR PRADEEP CHOWBEY, Chairman, Max Institute of Minimal Access, Metabolic & Bariatric Surgery

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Dr Pradeep Chowbey's operating rooms (OR) at New Delhi's Max Institute of Minimal Access, Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery look different from other ORs: the doors are wider, the massive operating tables support weight upwards of 300 kg, and surgeons stand on platforms to operate. Preparing patients for surgery involves bolstering and strapping their arms, shoulders and legs to prevent them from moving during surgery.

It's the excess weight that patients come here to lose that makes surgery a challenge. "As weight increases, everything — anaesthesia, positioning and surgery — take longer," says Dr Chowbey, who is among the busiest weight-loss surgeons in India. His team has to cut through layers of abdominal fat just to reach the small intestine and stomach to begin surgery, which takes roughly two and a half hours.

With 30 million of India's adult population overweight and obese and 62 million diabetic, weight-loss surgery is growing at 8% annually. "Roughly 15,000 procedures were done last year, up from 5,000 just three years ago," says Dr Muffazzal Lakkadawala, chairman, Institute of Minimal Invasive Surgical Sciences at Saifee Hospital, Mumbai.



SAUMYA KHANDELWAL / HT PHOTOS

BEATING THE PERILS OF EXTREME STYLE

HEALTH WISE



SANCHITA SHARMA

Thousands smirked as more than one story on the perils of extreme style made news earlier this week. First, the *British Medical Journal* reported the very odd case of a woman who landed in hospital after her skinny jeans cut off blood supply to her legs. This was followed by the unceremonious collapse of a man who strapped on stilettoes for a day to show the world he could walk the walk better than women.

Can ill-chosen apparel and accessories actually wreck your body? Undoubtedly. Does it mean that you should wrap yourself in swathes of natural fibre and only opt for orthopaedic shoes? Absolutely not. Unless your footwear or long scarf make you trip over and pull a ligament or break a bone or two, discomfort is temporary and damage, if any, happens because of repetitive injury over time.

So instead of sacrificing style to embrace prescription gear, the sensible option is to stop you at the first sign of red flags, which include swelling, numbness, tingling, bruising or pain.

TIGHT SPOT

The unnamed Aussie woman who collapsed did so because of nerve damage from squatting all day. The jeans aggravated the problem, but did not cause it. If skinny jeans were a real health hazard, people the world over would have been collapsing like swatted flies every day.

Another myth is that wearing tight jeans and briefs instead of boxers makes men infertile because it raises the body's temperature above what's normal for sperm to survive. This popular theory is just that, a theory that has yet to be scientifically proven. More than clothes, what lowers sperm health — count, movement and shape — is smoking, drinking, drug use, weight gain and inactivity.

HIGH & LOW

This was also the week when US-based video correspondent Brandon Cohen's hubris-destroying moment came after he declared that "girls are huge complainers, wearing heels isn't that bad" and decided to walk around all day in stilettoes. His day — which he described as "the worst day of my life" — ended with him returning home barefoot with his proverbial tail between his legs.



ILLUSTRATION: ABHIMANYU SINHA

Shoe types classified as "bad" are those with heels over 3 inches, pumps, flat thongs and flip-flops; with hard or rubber-soled shoes and work boots ranking average; and athletic shoes being the healthiest.

High heels wreck the stabilising mechanisms of the foot by shortening the Achilles' tendon and calf muscles, leading to calf, ankle and foot pain. They also push the body's centre of gravity forward and increase the pressure on the knees and feet, increasing risk of injury, so only choose those that fit comfortably. Kick them off at the first sign of pain.

NO FLIP-FLOP OVER FLATS

Flip-flops, so popular in India, hurt feet as much as heels because they offer no support or protection to the feet. They make feet roll inward, stretching ligaments and tendons, which pull toes out of alignment and causes pain and bunions (enlarged bone or tissue at the base of the big toe). Flat thongs and Roman sandals are equally problematic as they also expose the feet.

The best shoes mimic the natural shape of the feet while supporting the arch and providing flexible support to the toes. Apart from injury, bad footwear cause pain in the knees, ankles and feet, with some studies linking them to osteoarthritis of the knee.

BODY PIERCING/TATTOO

Tattoos are now almost as popular as blue denim, but most artists wielding the needle do not follow the sterile operating practices mandatory in medical centres. Contaminated equipment causes blood-borne infections, such as HIV that causes AIDS and Hepatitis C, which causes cirrhosis, liver failure and liver cancer. In the US, tattooing caused more cases of Hepatitis C infection than injecting drug use and blood transfusion, reported a study in the medical journal *Hepatology*. People with tattoos are nine times more likely to be infected with Hepatitis C, reported an earlier study in the journal *Medicine*. An added hazard comes with laser removal of tattoos. The laser works by breaking the ink into particles that are absorbed by the body; and while how well the skin heals varies with people, some scarring and pigmentation almost always remains.

Then there are external compression headaches and migraines triggered by tight caps, headbands, snug helmets, restrictive eyeshades and prescription glasses, and hairdos where hair is pulled back tight. In most cases, pain gets progressively worse as long as the offending trigger is in place, and removing it is all that's needed to end the discomfort.

ACHY-BREAKY HEAD

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A LOVE SONG FROM THE YAMUNA

SHE BABA



RENUKA NARAYANAN

Here's new talk about reviving our dead Yamuna which sets our hopes soaring that this precious river will gladden our lives again as she meant to, world without end. She is so much more than a 'substance'. I often think, as millions must, that the Yamuna brimmed with the most extraordinary memories of which surely the sweetest was of a stormy Shraavan night when a man with a basket on his head set his feet in her raging waters to cross from Mathura to Gokul?

Yet, though she is the river of the Rajdhani, the Yamuna is cut off from our lives. There are no beautiful riverfronts, promenades and boat rides to refresh those who presently live in or visit Delhi whereas this once-splendid river apparently saw interesting traffic and like the Ganga of blessed name drew innumerable pilgrims to her banks — dreamers, drop-outs, mystics, musicians, poets and saints.

One such fascinating person was Ras Khan, author of the 'Rachnavali', in which he says, "manus ho to vahi raskhani baso braj gokul gaon ke gvaran/ jo pasu hon to kaha bas mero charaun nit nand ko dhenu manjharan" (If I, Ras Khan, am reborn as human, I wish to be a cowherd in the village of Gokul in Brajbhumi. If born an animal, I would like to be a cow in the herd of Nanda, grazing blissfully all day).

How did 16th-17th century Saeed Ibrahim, said to be a Kabuli Pathan settled in Delhi, or perhaps Amroha in UP, become 'Ras Khan' (lode of rasa) of Mathura-Vrindavan-Gokul? And why do we sing his verses centuries later as part of the beloved heritage of Krishna Bhajan? One tradition goes that he was from a rich zamindari family of Amroha and was treated very shabbily by the local proud beauty he loved. Being a nobleman's son, Saeed Ibrahim knew



Yamuna: waiting for a clean-up SUNIL GHOSH/HT

Persian and Sanskrit. He chanced to read the Bhagvat Puran, the 'biography' of Sri Krishna, said to have been written by Veda Vyasa as a mind-cleanser on Sage Narada's advice. This was when Vyasa finished composing the Mahabharata and complained of feeling depressed after writing about so much destructive jealousy. When Saeed Ibrahim read of the unconditional love of the gopis for Sri Krishna in the Bhagvat Puran, he was so deeply moved that he went as a tourist to Vrindavan where he fell under the spell of Krishna-love, becoming a devotee himself.

The Delhi story goes that Saeed Ibrahim fell in love with the son of a Hindu merchant and followed him everywhere, which enraged everybody else. One day he heard one Vaishnava tell another, "We openly love the Lord as fearlessly and Saeed Ibrahim loves the merchant's son." The other snorted in dismissal and Ibrahim sprang at them in fury with his sword. But they quavered staunchly, "If you loved God as you do that boy, you would be a liberated person." Intrigued, he went with them to Vrindavan, found Krishna and wrote such heartfelt poetry that a Ras Khan artsfest would be a nice way indeed for Delhi to celebrate when the Yamuna is cleaned up.

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HEALTHSCAN MEDICINE, FITNESS AND LIFESTYLE TRENDS

YOUNG ADULTS SHOULD CONTROL ELEVATED BP

Young adults with high BP but still within normal range were more likely to have heart trouble in middle age, showed a study of 2,479 men and women followed for 25 years. Their ages ranged between 18 and 30 at the start of the study in 1985. They should take steps to reduce high BP by reducing salt intake, having a healthy body weight and being physically active, recommend researchers in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*.



'FITNESS' FOODS MAKE YOU EAT MORE

According to a study in the *Journal of Marketing Research*, "fitness branding" on health foods encourages consumers to eat more of these foods and exercise less, potentially undermining their efforts to lose or control weight. Unless a food is forbidden by a diet plan, branding a product as 'fit' increases consumption for those trying to watch their weight. To make matters worse, these eaters see the 'fit' food as a substitute for exercise and also reduce their physical activity.



PHOTOS: ISTOCK

WHY WOMEN HAVE DISRUPTED SLEEP IN THEIR 40S

Women in the early phases of menopause and more likely to have trouble sleeping, reports new research in the *Endocrine Society's Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*. During the earliest stage of the menopausal transition women may have irregular menstrual cycles due to fluctuating levels of the hormone progesterone, which influences sleep.

