

This is what happens when you lose just 10 lbs.

1. A Lower Cholesterol Level

Being overweight is linked to high levels of LDL, which is the “bad” type of cholesterol. As LDL cholesterol circulates through your blood, it can deposit plaque in your arteries, narrowing them – which can lead to heart attack or stroke.

Exercise and a healthy diet will help increase your HDL cholesterol, which is the “good” type of cholesterol that stops LDL from depositing on your artery walls. Ten pounds of weight loss can lower cholesterol by more than 10%.

2. Lower Blood Pressure

Blood pressure measures the pressure on your artery walls, so if you have plaque buildup in your arteries, your blood pressure will be high. Hypertension thickens the walls of the heart, leaving them stiff and prone to heart failure. As the heart works harder, blood vessels in the kidneys can be damaged, which can lead to kidney failure. Losing 10 pounds will decrease your blood pressure, protecting your heart and kidneys.

3. Reduced Risk for Heart Attacks

Excessive plaque buildup can result in dangerously narrowed arteries. In the case of a heart attack, your coronary artery becomes completely blocked, cutting off the oxygen that your heart muscle needs, with possibly fatal results.

As mentioned above, weight loss lowers your blood pressure and cholesterol. Incredibly, just 10 pounds of weight loss can result in a greater than 50% risk reduction for heart attacks.

4. Reduced Risk for Dementia

Nearly half of Americans have too much visceral fat, the abdominal fat that surrounds your internal organs, visible in their protruding bellies. The danger is this: visceral fat contains cells that release inflammation-causing chemicals in the body, which can cause memory loss and increase your chances of developing dementia.

Additionally, 2 symptoms of obesity, high blood pressure and high cholesterol, can put you at risk for stroke. Some strokes, known as “silent strokes” can occur without symptoms – but each time, blood is cut off to the brain, resulting in damaged, dementia-prone brain tissue. High blood pressure and cholesterol can also increase the likelihood that you’ll develop Alzheimer’s disease.

5. Reduced Risk for Sleep Apnea

When you are overweight, extra tissue thickens your windpipe wall, narrowing your airway. Consequently, the size of your tongue and tonsils become a threat to the narrowed airway – especially when you are sleeping, and can cause a life-threatening condition known as sleep apnea. In this illness, an unsuccessful effort to take in air results in a dangerously low oxygen level while you’re sleeping. Your brain shocks your body awake to keep you alive. If you have severe sleep apnea, you can be woken up hundreds of times a night.

Losing just 10 pounds can widen your windpipe, helping you sleep through the night and reduce your risk for developing sleep apnea. And when you sleep well, your levels of leptin (the hormone that signals when you’ve had enough to eat) rise. So, a good night’s sleep will help you lose even more weight.

6. Reduced Joint Pain

Being overweight puts huge pressure on your joints. For each extra pound of excess weight on your body, you add 4 times that amount of pressure on your knees. This means that 10 extra pounds equates to 40 pounds of pressure grinding down. And when walking up stairs, multiply your extra weight by 7. Thirty pounds of pressure just became 70 pounds. Over time, this force wears away your cartilage, leaving an area of arthritis.

As you lose weight and reduce the pressure on your joints, the cushioning between your bones will build back up. A 10 pound weight loss over 10 years may result in as much as a 50% decrease in your odds of developing osteoarthritis.

7. Reduced Risk for Cancer

Obesity increases cancer risk. The exact reasoning remains unclear– but fat cells are highly active, releasing large amounts of hormones like estrogen, insulin, and insulin-like growth factors that can fuel many cancers.

The risk for many types of cancers declines when you lose weight, but it's particularly true for breast and uterine cancer, where losing only 8 pounds can significantly reduce the levels of specific carcinogenic hormones.

8. Reduced Risk for Diabetes

The more excess weight on your body, the less sensitive your cells become to insulin, the hormone that manages the movement of sugar into your cells. Being overweight puts you at huge risk for developing type 2 diabetes, where your body's cells become resistant to insulin and cannot function properly as a result. By getting active and controlling your weight, you can increase your response to insulin. A weight loss of 10 pounds can reduce your chance of getting diabetes by 60%.

9. Improved Sex Life

Your sex drive is affected by high blood pressure and diabetes, conditions you're likely to have if you're overweight. Additionally, erectile dysfunction can be a problem for as many as 80% of obese and overweight men.

10. Taking Less Medications

Even if you only reduce the dosage you currently need for high blood pressure or diabetes, you'll still save money on your prescriptions. A recent study estimated that cutting just 100 calories a day could prevent or eliminate 71.2 million cases of obesity and save \$58 billion annually in the United States.

BONUS: You'll Feel better!

Your omentum is the pouch that contains your belly fat. The extra weight you are carrying on your omentum begins to squeeze your kidneys. Your blood pressure raises and your liver fattens; the accumulation of this fat characterizes nonalcoholic fatty liver disease. This added weight leaves your liver unable to process toxins. Over time, your liver hardens, and scar tissue begins to build up to replace liver cells. This scarring is called cirrhosis, which leaves you feeling tired and groggy.

Weight loss will allow your liver to recover. As it repairs itself, it decreases the toxins in your body. You'll see changes in how you feel and behave.