LIFESTYLE CHANGE

Make positive and consistent changes to your diet and exercise routine now because there is nothing special about Covid-19 that makes it attack overweight or obese patients; it is just overweight and obese patients are attacked more harshly.

FITNESS TIP

If you are training for weight loss make sure you are also following a sensible eating plan, because you can't out-train a bad diet.

David Fairlamb
THE FIT FACTOR

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THE UK has so far recorded the third highest number of deaths during the pandemic, with the official toll now approaching 45,000.

These stats are incredibly sad but with obesity doubling your chances of dying from coronavirus, research shows the high levels in Britain have fuelled fatalities.

The numbers don't lie; over a quarter of Britons are obese and the UK is the second fattest nation in Europe after Malta.

Ever since Boris Johnson was in intensive care he has been on a mission, believing that being overweight was a factor in his contracting such a severe form of the disease, and the growing evidence backs this up.

In a study of nearly 17,000 hospital patients with Covid-19 in the UK, those who were obese – with a body mass index (BMI) of more than 30 – had a 33% greater risk of dying than those who were not obese.

A separate study of NHS electronic health records found a doubling of the risk of dying from Covid-19 among people who were obese.

If other health conditions linked to obesity such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes were also taken into account the risk would be even higher, the researchers said.

And a study of critically ill patients in UK intensive care units found that nearly 34.5% were overweight, 31.5% were obese and 7% morbidly obese (a total of 73%), compared with 26% with a healthy BMI.

These stats can't be ignored and if you in the obese category you need to take action. The Government has said it will act but not indicated how yet, and is considering a range of more aggressive measures. They have been saying this for over a decade, but as far as I'm concerned they have just ticked a few boxes and not taken it seriously enough. Let's hope the hugely damning stats of the pandemic, so far, will mean they tackle it head on because there is no magic solution and it will not happen overnight.

Scientists are still trying to understand the connection better, but obesity seems to be a risk on various levels. The more overweight you are, the more fat you're carrying, the less fit you are and the lower your lung capacity.

This means it is a bigger struggle to get oxygen into the blood and around the body, and this is therefore certainly one reason why overweight and obese people in intensive care are more likely to need help with breathing and support with kidney function.

Hospital care may also be complicated by a person's size and any underlying, but as yet undiscovered, health issues.

It is also more difficult to incubate and scan obese patients. Obese patients may also be more difficult to turn in order to ease their breathing. There is nothing special about Covid-19 that makes it attack overweight or obese patients; it is just that overweight and obese patients are attacked more harshly. This is why it is so important to make lifestyle changes and take responsibility to improve your own health and well-being – so when the next health crisis arrives you are in the best position to fight it.

> Being obese can compromise your ability to fight illness in numerous ways

Motivational quote:

Losing weight is a mind game. Change your mind, change your body