In 2013, the American Medical Association formally recognized obesity as a disease. The association’s goal was to change the way the medical community tackles this complex health issue and decrease the stigma that comes from the widespread belief that this disease is solely the outcome of excessive eating and not enough exercise.

Today, approximately 119 million people in the US suffer from obesity, which is complex and multifactorial. Research now shows that family history and genetics, medications, environment, stress, energy expenditure, and other health problems, such as hypothyroidism, play a role in a person’s likelihood of developing this disease.

Individuals struggling with obesity are faced with issues such as job hiring discrimination, lower salaries and lack of promotion opportunities, and they are less likely to seek health care. Obesity is a metabolic disease, not a lifestyle choice or lack of willpower.

In addition to the weight stigma, people with obesity are also at risk of developing more than 253 chronic health conditions including diabetes, high cholesterol, heart disease, heart failure, and numerous cancers. The costs are enormous. In fact, Americans spend $1.4 trillion annually on direct and indirect costs related to obesity and associated health conditions, and annual medical costs are more than $1,400 higher compared to Americans without obesity.
Weight loss surgery may be an option if a person cannot lose weight or they have health problems caused by obesity.

Headed by Erik B. Wilson, MD, FACS, the UTMIST team is comprised of innovative surgeons dedicated to providing patients with state-of-the-art surgical therapies using the least invasive, most advanced, and safest techniques. As leaders in the field of minimally invasive surgery and faculty members of McGovern Medical School at UTHealth, their surgeons have completed more than 5,000 procedures to date.

**PROCEDURES AVAILABLE AT UTMIST**

**GASTRIC BYPASS SURGERY**
A common type of bariatric surgery which has been beneficial for decades and continues to evolve, this surgery increases weight loss by changing how the stomach and small intestine handle the food you eat.

**GASTRIC BANDING**
The surgeon places an adjustable band around the upper part of the stomach to create a small passage for food. The band stimulates appetite control by making a person feel full after eating small amounts of food as the stomach distends against the band.

**SLEEVE GASTRECTOMY**
This procedure reduces the stomach to about 15 percent of its original size (about the size of a banana). The procedure limits the amount of food that can be eaten by making a person feel full after eating small amounts of food.

**BILIOPANCREATIC DIVERSION WITH DUODENAL SWITCH SURGERY**
This procedure is similar to gastric bypass because it involves creating a small stomach pouch and rerouting the intestines. It allows food to bypass part of the small intestine so that a person absorbs fewer calories. However, this surgery is for people who are more than severely obese who have not been able to lose weight any other way.

**ENDOSCOPIC BARIATRIC REVISION SURGERY**
These procedures are for earlier stages of obesity and involve reducing appetite through transoral placement of plication sutures or temporary balloons in the stomach. Endoscopic procedures involve no surgical cuts or scars and are growing in scope very quickly.

**TACTICS FOR BATTLING OBESITY**
Losing weight and getting healthy demands a multi-faceted plan of action that involves a sustainable weight loss goal, good nutrition, physical activity, and plenty of rest. As with any disease, your treatment is led by your obesity medicine specialist who can assess all the comorbidities related to the disease and improve the real bottom line – your total health.

To help people battle obesity, The Center for Obesity Medicine and Metabolic Performance (COMMP) was created to work in concert with UT Physicians Minimally Invasive Surgeons of Texas (UTMIST). Led by Deborah Bade Horn, DO, MPH, the program is designed to help patients receive an intensive lifestyle intervention including nutrition, exercise, and pharmacotherapy.

Every patient who consults the doctors at UTMIST for weight-loss surgery has the opportunity to consult with the experts at COMMP, which resides in the same clinical office as the UTMIST practice. Surgeons work hand-in-hand with COMMP’s team of obesity medicine specialists to develop customized weight loss programs that combine medication, exercise, nutrition, and behavioral change including stress reduction and sleep. Their goal is to assist patients in making lifestyle changes that will allow them to maintain their weight loss for the long-term.

The obesity medicine specialists at COMMP provide individually tailored interventions designed to change the patient’s body composition and physiology, which includes a comprehensive and customized plan for patients using a multidimensional approach that involves:

- an in-depth initial assessment, including extensive lab-work, and resting metabolic rate and body composition analysis using the latest technology

- nutritional optimization through protein meal replacements combined with real food to control hunger and maintain strong, lean muscle mass

- an exercise plan, including a 20-module program that is tailored specifically to each patient

- behavior modification counseling

- medication that controls hunger and cravings by interrupting obesogenic physiology

The program also tracks and treats metabolic biomarkers, including glucose, lipids, liver function, resting metabolic rate, and blood pressure. Body composition markers including visceral fat, percent of total body fat, lean muscle mass, edema, and waist circumference are also monitored and a focus of treatment.

Through excellent medical care and the advancement of research, we can improve individual outcome and conquer obesity in the UT System and the U.S. Your experts at UTMIST and COMMP can help you, your family and your friends on the journey to optimal health.
An endowment can serve as an excellent incentive to attract the best and brightest faculty and students to UTHealth.

WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT

**ENDOWED DISTINGUISHED UNIVERSITY CHAIR $3,000,000**
The highest endowed position available and is bestowed upon best of the best at UTHealth.

**ENDOWED CHAIR AND ENDOWED DISTINGUISHED CHAIR $1,000,000 - $2,000,000**
Endowed chairs serve as a way to recognize high-performing department leaders and senior faculty members and recruit top talent to the university.

**CLINICAL AND RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP $1,000,000**
Endowed fellowships are an excellent means of attracting high-performing faculty members, graduate students, and fellows who make significant contributions to the university’s research efforts.

**FACULTY FELlowship $100,000**
Fellowships are awarded to highly qualified researchers to advance their work.

**ENDOWED RESEARCH FUND $50,000**
This type of endowment is designated to support research of special interest to the donor.

**GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP $25,000**
Graduate fellowships support graduate students and post-doctoral fellows.

**LECTURESHP $25,000**
Funds from this type of endowment are used to finance travel expenses related to bringing noted speakers to UTHealth.

To learn how you can help make a difference in the lives of people seeking to regain their health in our community and programs at McGovern Medical School or UTHealth School of Public Health, please contact:

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