UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECT OF OBESITY ON FERTILITY AMONG REPRODUCTIVE-AGE WOMEN

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Obesity is a
major public health issue
globally and in the United States
and is particularly common among repro-
ductive-age women. According to researchers,
approximately one-third of U.S. adult women are
obese (Ogden, Carroll, Kit, & Flegal, 2014). Defined
by the World Health Organization (2015) as a body mass
index (BMI) greater than 30 kg/m^2, obesity has been linked
to numerous health problems including hypertension, type 2
diabetes, hypercholesterolemia, coronary artery disease, stroke,
asthma, and arthritis (Talmor & Dunphy, 2015). In addition to
morbidity, obesity is estimated to have contributed to 2.8 million
deaths globally between 1980 and 2008. It has been projected
that the United States alone will spend $956 billion on health
care costs because of overweight and obesity by the year 2030
(Mitchell & Shaw, 2015).

Abstract: Obesity is a major public health concern, and obesity among women of childbearing age can have a negative impact on fertility. The mechanism of action between obesity and infertility is complex and includes hormonal factors, alterations in ovulation, and changes in the menstrual cycle. Maternal obesity has also been linked to spontaneous abortion and poorer maternal and fetal health outcomes. Many interventions exist to help childbearing women achieve a lower body mass index. These include lifestyle modifications (diet/physical activity) and surgical and pharmacologic interventions. This article reviews the pathophysiology of the relationship between obesity and infertility and discusses evidence-based interventions for improving fertility among obese childbearing women. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.nwh.2016.07.001