

MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGHS **RESEARCH SUMMARY**

TOPIC: A TINY WORM MAY HOLD THE KEY TO CURBING OBESITY
REPORT: MB #5094

BACKGROUND: Obesity is a complex disease involving an excessive amount of body fat. Obesity isn't just a cosmetic concern. It's a medical problem that increases the risk of other diseases and health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and certain cancers. In the United States, it is estimated that 93 million Americans are affected by obesity. More than nine million adolescents (children and teens six to 19 years old) are affected by excess weight. Children who are affected by obesity are 70 percent more likely to continue being affected by it into adulthood.

(Sources: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/obesity/symptoms-causes/syc-20375742#:~:text=Obesity%20is%20a%20complex%20disease,blood%20pressure%20and%20certain%20cancers>.
<https://www.obesityaction.org/get-educated/public-resources/obesity-statistics-fact-sheets/>)

DIAGNOSING: The most common way to determine if a person is affected by overweight or obesity is to calculate BMI, which is an estimate of body fat that compares a person's weight to their height. Healthcare providers use BMI, along with information about additional risk factors, to determine a person's risk for developing weight-related diseases. Usually, the higher a person's BMI, the higher the risk of disease. Common symptoms of obesity in adults include excess body fat, particularly around the waist, shortness of breath, sweating more than usual, snoring, fatigue, which can range from mild to extreme, and pain, especially in the back and joints.

(Sources: <https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/obesity/conditioninfo/diagnosed>
<https://www.verywellhealth.com/obesity-symptoms-4689168>)

NEW THERAPY: Gelesis100 (Plenity), just approved by the Food and Drug Administration in April and expected to come on the market later this year, is an exciting recent innovation in weight management. Although Plenity comes in capsule form, it is actually a weight loss device, not a medication. The capsules are filled with hydrogel particles. When taken with a full glass of water before meals, the particles expand in the stomach and take up space, leading to the sensation of fullness. The gel particles eventually move through the intestinal tract and are broken down by enzymes and excreted. In the pivotal randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial about 60% of those who followed a diet and exercise plan plus took Plenity lost 5% or more of their initial weight. And about 25% of those who took it were high responders, losing 10% or more of initial weight.

(Source: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/new-fda-approved-weight-loss-device-shows-promise-2019072917362>)

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If this story or any other Ivanhoe story has impacted your life or prompted you or someone you know to seek or change treatments, please let us know by contacting Marjorie Bekaert Thomas at mthomas@ivanhoe.com