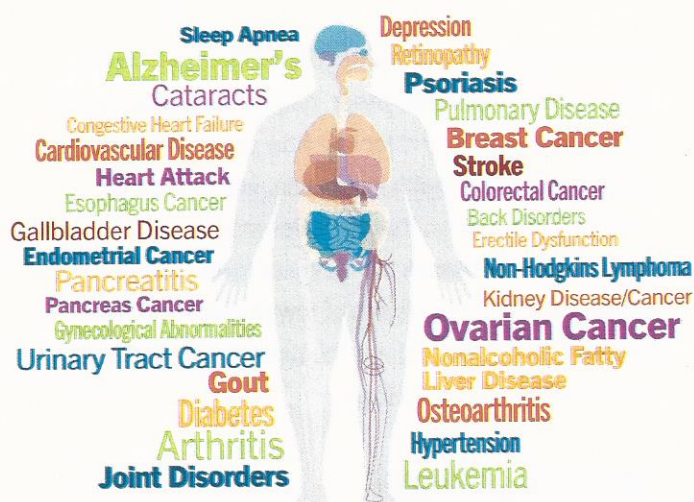


it easier for cars than pedestrians, walkers, runners and bikers. Schools have reduced recess time, opting to bus kids to school — rather than walking — and serve processed foods for lunch. Workplaces have become more sedentary due to increases in technology. Even our homes are jam-packed with conveniences that don't require as much manual labor as in the past — garage door openers, remote controls for TV, etc. And if that wasn't enough, there is evidence that if your closest friend is obese, your likelihood of becoming obese increases by 57 percent³.

Experts suggest there are more than 50 diseases linked to obesity including several cancers, diabetes, heart conditions, arthritis, and depression. And, many of these health risks and chronic conditions are avoidable. These persistent conditions lead to lifelong disability, compromised quality of life, premature death that could have been prevented, and burgeoning health care costs.

OBEISITY IS LINKED TO HIGH-COST CONDITIONS

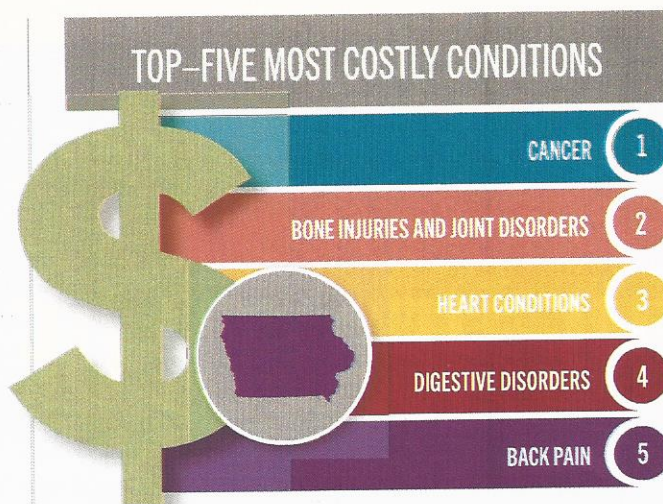


CONDITIONS OF IOWANS

Obesity is a common, underlying factor that contributes to the most costly conditions among Wellmark members in Iowa. Some conditions are more prevalent than others.

The top-five most costly conditions include:

Cancer: Topping the list is one word you hope you never hear: cancer. Last year, 17,140 new cancer cases were diagnosed in Iowa⁴. There is no denying that this is a life-changing diagnosis. And with numbers like this, it is hard not to know someone who has been impacted by this disease. But did you know that



obesity can contribute to various forms of cancer? Obesity is associated with increased risk of several types of cancers including: esophageal, pancreatic, colon and rectum, breast (after menopause), endometrial, kidney, thyroid, and gallbladder⁵. Although there are some variances in cost by the cancer type and severity, the costs are high and no one wants to face this challenge. The average cost to treat pancreatic cancer, as an example, is \$187,544⁶.

Bone injuries and joint disorders: The second most costly category is bone injuries and joint disorders. The Blue Cross Blue Shield Association reports the average cost for a knee replacement is \$31,124 and hip replacement is \$30,124. It should be no surprise that excess weight places strain on bones, muscles and joints leading to serious injuries, disabilities or diseases that could have been prevented, creating a healthier, pain-free life.

Heart conditions: Heart disease develops quietly over time, and its effects can be costly or even deadly. You may not have high blood pressure or high cholesterol, but that doesn't mean you are not at risk. Because heart disease knows no limits, take the first step by standing on the scale. Even a few extra pounds can be hard on your heart. This means your heart needs to pump harder to supply blood to all your cells. Your heart can suffer from the increased workload leading to other heart conditions such as abnormal heart rhythm, heart attack or heart failure. The national average for bypass surgery hovers around \$50,000.

Digestive disorders: The health of your digestive system has a lot to do with lifestyle — the food you eat, the amount of exercise you get, and the level of daily stress. Paying attention to these factors alone can improve your overall quality life and fend off any digestive disorders.

³ <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMs066082>

⁴ <http://www.cancer.org/research/cancerfactsstatistics/cancerfactsfigures2015/>

⁵ <http://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/obesity/obesity-fact-sheet>

⁶ <https://costprojections.cancer.gov/annual.costs.html>