



## TOOL E1 Clinical care pathways

TOOL  
E1

<b>For:</b>	Healthcare professionals, particularly primary care clinicians
<b>About:</b>	This tool contains guidance from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) and the Department of Health. It provides clinical care pathways for children and adults.
<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide healthcare professionals with the official documents that clinicians should be using to assess overweight and obese individuals.
<b>Use:</b>	To be used when in consultation with an overweight or obese patient.
<b>Resource:</b>	<i>Obesity: the prevention, identification, assessment and management of overweight and obesity in adults and children.</i> <sup>6</sup> <a href="http://www.nice.org.uk">www.nice.org.uk</a> <i>Care pathway for the management of overweight and obesity.</i> <sup>120</sup> <a href="http://www.dh.gov.uk">www.dh.gov.uk</a>

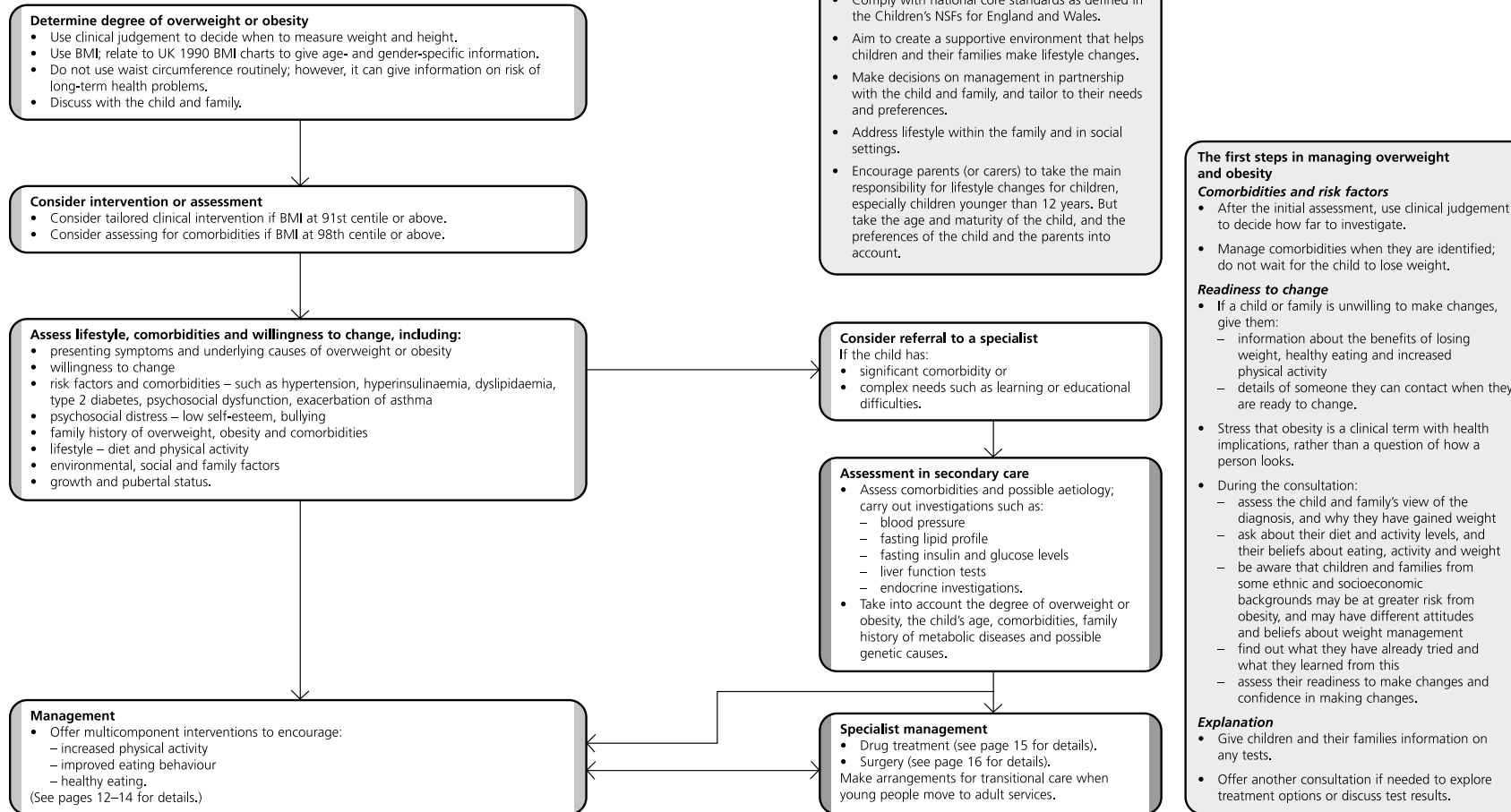
### NICE guideline on obesity

NICE has developed clinical care pathways for children and adults for use by healthcare professionals. Further details can be found in *Obesity: the prevention, identification, assessment and management of overweight and obesity in adults and children.*<sup>6</sup> In addition, a summary of NICE recommendations and the clinical care pathways can be found in: *Quick reference guide 2: For the NHS,*<sup>204</sup> which can be downloaded from the NICE website at [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

Clinical care pathway for children

## Management of overweight and obesity in children

### Assessment and classification



**Note:** Please refer to the NICE guidelines for page references.

# Management of overweight and obesity in adults

## Assessment and classification

### Determine degree of overweight or obesity

- Use clinical judgement to decide when to measure weight and height
- Use BMI to classify degree of obesity (see table 1, below) but use clinical judgement:
  - BMI may be less accurate in highly muscular people
  - for Asian adults, risk factors may be of concern at lower BMI
  - for older people, risk factors may become important at higher BMIs
- Use waist circumference in people with a BMI less than 35 kg/m<sup>2</sup> to assess health risks (see table 2, bottom left)
- Bioimpedance is not recommended as a substitute for BMI
- Tell the person their classification, and how this affects their risk of long-term health problems

Table 1 Classifying overweight and obesity

Classification	BMI (kg/m <sup>2</sup> )
Healthy weight	18.5–24.9
Overweight	25–29.9
Obesity I	30–34.9
Obesity II	35–39.9
Obesity III	40 or more

Table 2 Assessing risks from overweight and obesity

BMI classification	Waist circumference		
	Low	High	Very high
Overweight	No increased risk	Increased risk	High risk
Obesity I	Increased risk	High risk	Very high risk

For men, waist circumference of less than 94 cm is low, 94–102 cm is high and more than 102 cm is very high.  
 For women, waist circumference of less than 80 cm is low, 80–88 cm is high and more than 88 cm is very high.

### Assess lifestyle, comorbidities and willingness to change, including:

- presenting symptoms and underlying causes of overweight or obesity
- eating behaviour
- risk factors and comorbidities – such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, dyslipidaemia, osteoarthritis and sleep apnoea; check lipid profile and blood glucose (preferably fasting) and blood pressure
- lifestyle – diet and physical activity
- psychosocial distress
- environmental, social and family factors, including family history of overweight and obesity and comorbidities
- willingness and motivation to change
- potential of weight loss to improve health
- psychological problems
- medical problems and medication.

### Management

- Offer multicomponent interventions to encourage:
  - increased physical activity
  - improved eating behaviour
  - healthy eating (see pages 20–22 for details).
- Drug treatment (see page 23–24 for details).

### General principles of care for adults

- Offer regular long-term follow-up by a trained professional.
- Ensure continuity of care through good record keeping.
- Make the choice of any intervention through negotiation with the person.
- Tailor the weight-management programme to the person's preferences, initial fitness, health status and lifestyle.
- In specialist settings, ensure there is equipment for treating people who are severely obese, such as special seating, and adequate weighing and monitoring equipment.
- Hospitals should have access to specialist equipment for general care of people who are severely obese, including larger scanners and beds.

### Consider referral:

- for assessment of the underlying causes of overweight or obesity
- if the person has complex disease states or needs that cannot be managed in primary or secondary care
- if conventional treatment has failed
- if considering drug therapy for a person with a BMI more than 50 kg/m<sup>2</sup>
- if specialist interventions (such as a very-low-calorie diet for extended periods) may be needed
- if surgery is being considered.

### Specialist assessment and management

- Assessment and management as needed.
- Surgery and follow-up (see pages 25–26).

A guide to deciding the initial level of intervention to discuss

BMI classification	Waist circumference			Co-morbidities present
	Low	High	Very high	
Overweight				
Obesity I				
Obesity II				
Obesity III				

- General advice on healthy weight and lifestyle.
- Diet and physical activity.
- Diet and physical activity; consider drugs.
- Diet and physical activity; consider drugs; consider surgery.

### The first steps in managing overweight and obesity

#### Comorbidities and risk factors

- After the initial assessment, use clinical judgement to decide how far to investigate.
- Manage comorbidities when they are identified; do not wait for the person to lose weight.

#### Readiness to change

- If the person is unwilling to make changes, give them:
  - information about the benefits of losing weight, healthy eating and increased physical activity
  - details of someone they can contact when they are ready to change.
- Stress that obesity is a clinical term with health implications, rather than a question of how a person looks.
- During the consultation:
  - assess the person's view of the diagnosis, and why they have gained weight
  - ask about their diet and activity levels, and beliefs about eating, activity and weight
  - be aware that people from some ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds may be at greater risk from obesity, and may have different attitudes and beliefs about weight management
  - find out what they have already tried and what they learned from this
  - assess readiness to make changes and confidence in making changes.

#### Explanation

- Give people information on any tests.
- Offer another consultation if needed to explore treatment options or discuss test results.

**Note:** Please refer to the NICE guidelines for page references.

## Care pathways from the Department of Health

### Care pathway for the management of overweight and obesity

This booklet offers evidence-based guidance to help primary care clinicians identify and treat children, young people (under 20 years) and adults who are overweight or obese.<sup>120</sup> The booklet includes:

- Adult care pathway
- Children and young people care pathway
- Raising the issue of weight in adults
- Raising the issue of weight in children and young people.

The *Raising the issue of weight* tools provide tips on how to initiate discussion with patients. (See **Tool E5** for more on this.)

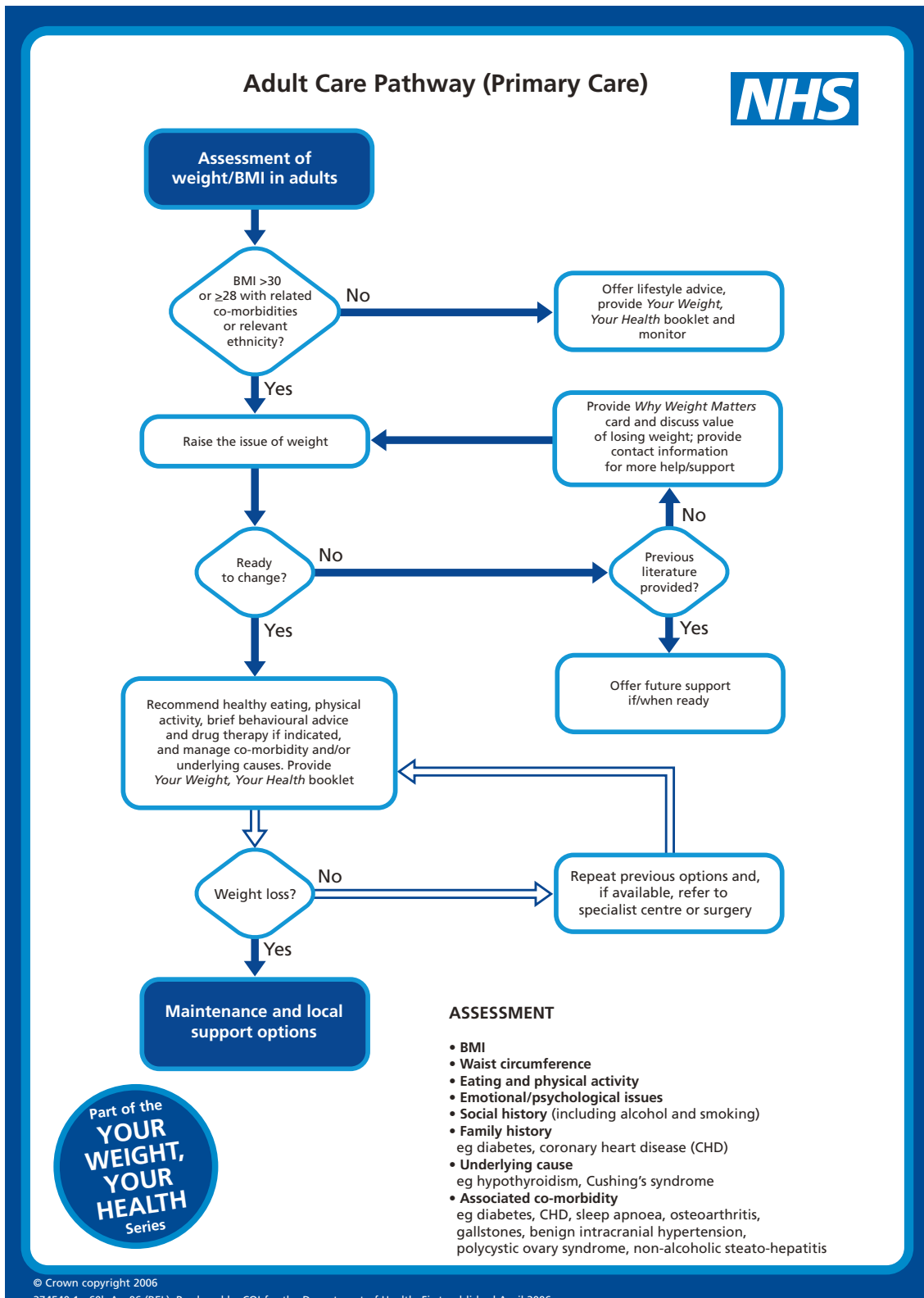
The pathways are also available as separate laminated posters (see pages 198-200).

To access these materials, visit [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) or order copies from:

DH Publications Orderline  
PO Box 777  
London SE1 6XH  
Email: [dh@prolog.uk.com](mailto:dh@prolog.uk.com)  
Tel: 0300 123 1002  
Fax: 01623 724 524  
Minicom: 0300 123 1003 (8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday)

Adult care pathway

Laminated poster<sup>205</sup> – available from Department of Health Publications (see page 198)



Children and young people care pathway

Laminated poster<sup>206</sup> – available from Department of Health Publications (see page 198)

