

Lifestyle and Weight Management Clinic Environment Tips

Use the tips below to assess your clinic environment for factors that foster effective lifestyle and weight management. Jot ideas for improvement, within budget and space limits, in the panels at right.

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Furniture and equipment

Tips to provide a comfortable, effective environment for treating obese patients:

- Waiting room with sturdy, armless chairs (6 to 8 inches of space in between) that can accommodate 600 pounds
- Scale that can accommodate 600 pounds, in private area if possible
- Large-size gowns, cloth tape measure to check waist circumference
- Sturdy, wide exam tables bolted to the floor, with sturdy step stools
- Exam equipment: large-size blood pressure cuffs, extra-long phlebotomy needles
- Lavatory with floor-mounted toilet, specimen collector with handle, properly mounted grab bars

Potential improvements, within budget/space limits

Information environment

Tips to turn your waiting room and exam rooms into **learning rooms** that provide information and inspiration for lifestyle management:

- Magazines with helpful information on activity, good nutrition, and stress management (such as *Prevention*, *Cooking Light*, *Health*, *Heart-Healthy Living*, *Psychology Today*)
- DVDs or video clips that support wellness and lifestyle management
- Waiting room displays stocked with patient education materials on wellness/prevention
- Patient education materials stocked and ready to distribute in exam rooms
- Links on the clinic website to information, resources, and apps that support activity, good nutrition and stress management

Potential improvements, within budget/space limits

Communication with patients

Tips to improve your communication with patients related to lifestyle/weight:

- Provide training for clinic team members in motivational interviewing techniques
- Use language appropriately in relation to weight:
 - Recording weight without comment
 - Asking for permission before discussing weight concerns with a patient
 - Knowing the definitions of "overweight" and "obesity" and training office staff to use the terms in a sensitive, objective way. For example, "Your weight puts you in a category of obesity with severe risk for other problems like heart disease and diabetes."
- Avoiding jokes about weight
- Avoiding labels or phrases that imply moral judgment or criticism about weight

Potential improvements, within budget/space limits
