



## Workplace Wellness: Obesity Cost Calculator

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Obesity is increasingly affecting workers all over the world. Many organizations realize the need to assess the costs of obesity as it relates to their bottom line. Forward-thinking organizations are looking for ways to quantify the magnitude of this challenge and to assess the options and benefits of providing interventions and incentives to better manage the health of their employees.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s [Obesity Cost Calculator](#) helps organizations to estimate obesity-related costs and to compare the costs and benefits of user-defined interventions targeted at reducing obesity.

The calculator estimates the costs of obesity based on characteristics of your company. These characteristics include costs for medical expenditures and the dollar value of increased absenteeism resulting from obesity. Costs are estimated separately based on body mass index (BMI).

The calculator also provides a module to assess the expected savings of interventions to reduce obesity, potential reductions in medical costs and work loss resulting from interventions, and the number of years before a break-even period is reached.

Each is estimated under several user-driven scenarios concerning the expected costs and savings resulting from the intervention.

**Before you begin using the cost calculator, you will need to gather specific information about your company:** average hourly wages, percentage of employees receiving health benefits and the BMIs of your employees. If you do not have some of this data for your company, the Obesity Cost Calculator will provide default values from nationally representative data sets to calculate the cost estimates.

The cost of obesity must be calculated before determining your return on investment (ROI). You will need to decide the appropriate inputs for this calculation based on your budgeted costs for the intervention, anticipated participation rates, employee co-payments, annual work days missed (current and anticipated post-intervention rates) and expected weight loss of employees.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

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