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Patient Weight and Weighing Information

Per American Medical Association Medical Code of Ethics Opinion 1.1.3 regarding patient rights: have the right "to make decisions about the care the physician recommends and to have those decisions respected. A patient who has decision-making capacity may accept or refuse any recommended medical intervention."¹

Being weighed at the doctor may feel like a mundane routine to healthcare workers and for many patients just be a mild annoyance. However, for many people, including those who have struggled with eating disorders who have been subjected to traumatic experiences revolving around their weight (e.g. weight stigma and fatphobia), getting weighed, seeing their weight/BMI/weight status and being told to lose weight prevent them from seeking medical care.^{2,3}

Patient instructions: fill out your name and check any and all options you are requesting.

Health care team instructions: please review the following requests of this patient to best meet their needs and goals today. If possible, share this with their entire care team and include a copy in their chart. Additional information regarding this subject is provided at the end of this form.

Per my patient rights I, _____ (patient name), am requesting the following (check any and all that apply):

I do **not** want to be weighed today. I will report any weight changes I am concerned about.

I am willing to be weighed, but do **not** want to see my weight (in pounds or kilos), BMI, or weight status, including whether my weight has changed and/or in which direction. Please take every precaution available to ensure the entire care team is aware, and please do not provide any handouts or care summaries that include this information (e.g. cutout or binder with the numbers).

I do **not** want to discuss weight loss or weight loss surgery as a treatment option.

I am willing to be weighed if a weight is medically necessary for a medication dosage. Please use the appropriate medical equipment for my body.

Good practices for all patient interaction:

- Ask permission for every procedure, including whether a patient wants to be weighed.
- Provide informed consent on every treatment option provided, even for recommendations that seem low risk without risk.
- When possible, provide multiple options for treating a condition.
- Note: weight loss is not a behavior. Focus on healthy habits and acknowledge that many people will not experience significant weight changes.
- Treat weight as a non-modifiable risk factor by acknowledging the vast research base that shows that intentional weight loss is not possible for the vast majority of people.
- Respect the patient's autonomy and ability to decide what's best for them.

Citations and additional resources on back