

Virtual Doctor Script

Differences between scripts noted in bold italics

Genomic Information Version:

Hi, I'm Doctor Morrison. Good to see you.

Now, I see that you're here for a routine checkup. Before I start with that, I'd like to talk with you about your health.

I noticed when I looked at your chart your weight is above what is considered to be a healthy weight for your height.

Let's take a few minutes to discuss your weight.

As you may know, being overweight can have a big impact on your health. You may have heard that it's been linked to many health conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. What you may not know is that it also increases your chances of getting breast cancer, the most common cancer among women. In fact, having higher body weight can put you at over 2-and-a-half times greater risk for breast cancer later in life. So, it's very important that we address this for the good of your health.

Many people are surprised to hear that being overweight increases your chances of getting breast cancer. What do you think of this information?

What I'd like to do is give you some more information that will help us design a strategy for weight management in the future.

Something you may not be thinking about is how much people's genetics or their DNA can influence their body weight - perhaps much more than they realize.

People's weight is affected by their behavior, but it's also greatly affected by the genes they inherit from their parents. The two work hand-in-hand to determine our weight.

Scientists haven't figured out all of the ways that genes influence our weight, but they have discovered a few genes that are common in the population and may affect how much weight we gain. Genes can influence how our bodies work - they can influence things like metabolism and how quickly we feel full when we eat. Our genes may also influence certain behaviors, like how much we enjoy exercising, which foods we like to eat, and whether we're driven to eat when we're not hungry. And these things go on to affect the balance between how much energy we're likely to take in through food and how much energy we're likely to burn with exercise.

So, what do you think all of this means for you?

For some people, maintaining a healthy weight is harder because of the genes they got from their parents. But that doesn't mean it can't be done.

So, what are some realistic things you can do right now to increase your healthy eating and physical activity?

Here's something to consider: you can lower your blood pressure and cholesterol by losing as little as 10% of your body weight. Women may also be able to reduce their risk for breast cancer by achieving a healthy weight or getting more exercise. In fact, a healthy diet and exercise can provide health benefits all on their own.

Now, when people think about physical activity, they usually think of exercise like running, biking, or lifting weights. But - it's important to note that you can also burn calories in other ways. For example, standing burns more calories than sitting, and taking the stairs burns more calories than taking the elevator. Believe it or not, pacing while on the phone, "fidgeting," or tapping your feet also burn calories, and those calories can really add up. Any of these things are better than just sitting still.

I think it'd be a good idea to follow-up so we can see how you're doing and discuss additional strategies for weight management. For now, let's talk about some of the other things that brought you here today.

Behavioral information version:

Hi, I'm Doctor Morrison. Good to see you.

Now, I see that you're here for a routine checkup. Before I start with that, I'd like to talk with you about your health.

I noticed when I looked at your chart that your weight is above what is considered to be a healthy weight for your height.

Let's take a few minutes to discuss your weight.

As you may know, being overweight can have a big impact on your health. You may have heard that it's been linked to many health conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. What you may not know is that it also increases your chances of getting breast cancer, the most common cancer among women. In fact, having higher body weight can put you at over 2-and-a-half times greater risk for breast cancer later in life. So, it's very important that we address this for the good of your health.

Many people are surprised to hear that being overweight increases your chances of getting breast cancer. What do you think of this information?

What I'd like to do is give you some more information that will help us design a strategy for weight management in the future.

Something you may not be thinking about is how much people's behavior and the environment around them can influence their body weight-- perhaps much more than they realize.

People's weight is greatly affected by what they eat and how much exercise they get. The two work hand-in-hand to determine our weight.

Scientists haven't figured out all of the ways that particular diets or exercise regimens influence our weight, but they have discovered that when we lose weight, our body tries to get back to a stable, steady point. It can do this by increasing hunger and making us want to eat more food. And, when we lose weight, it takes less energy for our body to do its regular activities, so we burn fewer calories throughout the day. Our weight is also affected by whether we're driven to eat when we're not hungry. And, the way most of us live also means that we spend a lot of time sitting still instead of moving around. So these things go on to affect the balance between how much energy we're likely to take in through food and how much energy we're likely to burn through exercise.

So, what do you think all of this means for you?

For some people, maintaining a healthy weight is harder because of their busy lifestyle. But that doesn't mean it can't be done.

So, what are some realistic things you can do right now to increase your healthy eating and physical activity?

A 10% weight loss can significantly lower health risks and can result in health gains, like lowering blood pressure and cholesterol. A healthy diet and exercise can provide health benefits all on their own. Women may also be able to reduce their risk for breast cancer by achieving a healthy weight or getting more exercise.

When people think about physical activity, they usually think of exercise like running, biking, or lifting weights. But - it is important to note that you can also burn calories simply by spending less time being sedentary, or still. For example, standing burns more calories than sitting, and taking the stairs burns more calories than taking an escalator or elevator. Pacing while on the phone, "fidgeting," or tapping one's feet are also strategies to burn calories, and those calories can really add up."

I'll give you some more specific information at the end of our visit that will help us decide on a strategy for weight management. For now, let's talk about some of the other things that brought you here today.