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Morbidly Obese Employees Cost Employers More

A new study in the *American Journal of Health Promotion* finds that, on average, a morbidly obese employee costs an employer over \$4,000 more per year in healthcare and related costs than an employee who is of normal weight.

The study revealed that obese individuals who had comorbidities such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and high cholesterol incurred more costs than obese workers without these conditions. According to the study, someone who is overweight or obese and also has diabetes is more likely to file a short-term disability claim compared to someone who doesn't have diabetes but is overweight or obese.

The study analyzed data from nearly 30,000, mostly male employees over a three-year period and included self-reported employee health information, medical visits and prescription claims, and employer-reported data on absenteeism, short-term disability and workers compensation claims. Compared with an employee with a BMI of 25, an employee with a BMI of 35, which is considered obese, has nearly double the risk of filing a short-term disability claim or a workers' compensation claim. Normal weight employees cost an average of \$3,830 per year in covered medical claims, sick days, short-term disability and workers compensation while a morbidly obese person costs employers more than double that at \$8,067.



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