

Overweight firefighters more likely to attempt weight loss if advised by doctor

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Overweight firefighters are twice as likely to attempt to lose weight if their health care provider gives them weight loss advice, according to new research from The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) School of Public Health. The results were published in this month's print edition of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.

More than 75 percent of firefighters are overweight or obese and more than half do not consider themselves to be overweight, according to previous research. In a study published last year, UTHealth researchers found that [health care professionals](#) provide weight advice to only 48 percent of obese and 12 percent of overweight firefighters.

In the new study, firefighters who received weight loss advice from a health care provider were 4.8 times more likely to have accurate weight perceptions and twice as likely to attempt weight loss. Study participants who were older, had higher body fat and more than one chronic disease were more likely to receive weight loss advice.

"What we're seeing here is that if a doctor says anything about [weight loss](#), it makes a difference. Firefighters are especially at risk for cardiovascular disease, so it's good news that they're responding to [health care](#) providers," said R. Sue Day, Ph.D., senior author and associate professor in the Department of Epidemiology, Human Genetics, and Environmental Sciences at UTHealth School of Public Health.

Researchers examined data from 763 overweight or obese male firefighters enrolled in Fuel 2 Flight, a study measuring [health](#) conditions of firefighters across the country from 2011 to 2012.

Austin Brown, Ph.D., graduate of the School of Public Health and current post-doctoral fellow at Baylor College of Medicine, was first author of the study, titled "Weight Advice Associated with Male Firefighter Weight Perception and Behavior." George Delclos, M.D., Ph.D., and Sheng Luo, Ph.D., from the School of Public Health were co-authors of the paper, as were researchers from the Center for Fire, Rescue and EMS Health Research.

More information: [www.ajpmonline.org/article/S07... \(15\)00157-9/abstract](http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S07... (15)00157-9/abstract)

Provided by University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

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