

Surgeon General's Healthy Weight Advice for Consumers

“Choose a Healthy Weight for Life”

AIM FOR A HEALTHY WEIGHT

- Find your Body Mass Index (BMI) on the chart below.
- If you are overweight or obese, losing just 10% of your body weight can improve your health.
- If you need to lose weight, do so gradually—1/2 to 2 pounds per week.

BE ACTIVE

- Keep physically active to balance the calories you consume.
- Be physically active for at least 30 minutes (adults) or 60 minutes (children) on most days of the week.
- Limit TV time to less than 2 hours per day.

EAT WELL

- Select sensible portion sizes.
- Follow the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines).

ARE YOU AT A HEALTHY WEIGHT? WHAT IS YOUR BODY MASS INDEX?

		Weight in Pounds													
		120	130	140	150	160	170	180	190	200	210	220	230	240	250
Height in Feet and Inches	4'6	29	31	34	36	39	41	43	46	48	51	53	56	58	60
	4'8	27	29	31	34	36	38	40	43	45	47	49	52	54	56
	4'10	25	27	29	31	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52
	5'0	23	25	27	29	31	33	35	37	39	41	43	45	47	49
	5'2	22	24	26	27	29	31	33	35	37	38	40	42	44	46
	5'4	21	22	24	26	28	29	31	33	34	36	38	40	41	43
	5'6	19	21	23	24	26	27	29	31	32	34	36	37	39	40
	5'8	18	20	21	23	24	26	27	29	30	32	34	35	37	38
	5'10	17	19	20	22	23	24	26	27	29	30	32	33	35	36
	6'0	16	18	19	20	22	23	24	26	27	28	30	31	33	34
	6'2	15	17	18	19	21	22	23	24	26	27	28	30	31	32
	6'4	15	16	17	18	20	21	22	23	24	26	27	28	29	30
	6'6	14	15	16	17	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	27	28	29
	6'8	13	14	15	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	28

Healthy Weight
 Overweight
 Obese

Note: This chart is for adults (aged 20 years and older).

Measuring Overweight and Obesity

WHAT MEASURE IS USED?

- An expert panel, convened by the National Institutes of Health in 1998, recommended that Body Mass Index (BMI) be used to classify overweight and obesity.

WHY IS BMI USED?

- BMI correlates with risk of disease and death; for example, heart disease increases with increasing BMI in all population groups.
- Calculating BMI is simple, rapid, and inexpensive.
- BMI correlates well with total body fat for the majority of people.

DETERMINING BMI

- BMI is a measure of weight in relation to height:

$$\text{BMI} = \left\{ \frac{\text{weight (kg)}}{\text{height (m)}^2} \right\} \quad \text{or} \quad \text{BMI} = \left\{ \frac{\text{weight (pounds)} \times 703}{\text{height (inches)}^2} \right\}$$

- As an alternative to calculating BMI, tables to determine BMI are commonly available (www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/bmi_tbl.htm).

CLASSIFICATION OF OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY BY BMI

- In adults:
 - Healthy weight 18.5-24.9
 - Overweight 25.0-29.9
 - Obesity Class I 30.0-34.9
 - Class II 35.0-39.9
 - Class III ≥ 40.0
- In children and adolescents aged 6 to 19 years, overweight has been defined as a sex- and age-specific BMI at or above the 95th percentile, based on revised Centers for Disease Control and Prevention growth charts (www.cdc.gov/growthcharts).
- BMI has some limitations in that it can overestimate body fat in persons who are very muscular, and it can underestimate body fat in persons who have lost muscle mass, such as many elderly.
- An actual diagnosis of overweight or obesity should be made by a health professional.

HEALTH CONSEQUENCES

- Overweight and obesity are associated with heart disease, certain types of cancer, type 2 diabetes, stroke, arthritis, breathing problems, and psychological disorders, such as depression.
- Solely having a BMI in the overweight or obese range does not necessarily indicate that a person is unhealthy. Other risk factors, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, diabetes, and personal and family medical history are important to consider when assessing overall health.
- The higher a person's BMI is above 25, the greater their weight-related health risks.