

# A focus on **Body Mass Index**

Knowing your **numbers** means knowing your **risk**

Overweight and obese refer to ranges of weight that are considered unhealthy for a given height. Being overweight can lead to obesity, and obesity is defined as having too much body fat. Excess fat, especially around your waist, may put a strain on your heart and can lead to serious health problems such as: Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, sleep apnea, varicose veins, and other chronic conditions.

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a number calculated using your weight and height. Knowing your BMI is one simple way to determine if your weight is putting you at risk for health problems.

## How to calculate your BMI

Your BMI estimates how much you should weigh based on your height.

Here's how to calculate it:

- Multiply your weight in pounds by 703.
- Divide that answer by your height in inches.
- Divide that answer by your height in inches again.

### BMI Category for Adults

Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5 - 24.9	Healthy
25.0 - 29.9	Overweight
Over 30	Obese

## How to calculate your waist circumference

You can easily measure your own your waist circumference to determine if you are storing too much body fat in your abdomen:

- Place a cloth measuring tape around your bare abdomen just above your hip bones (do not use your belly button as a guide).
- Make sure the tape is horizontal all the way around, and snug (but not pulling your skin in).
- Breathe normally, and read the measurement.

Women with a waist measurement of more than 35 inches or men with a waist measurement of more than 40 inches may have a higher risk for developing diabetes or heart disease.

Lowering your BMI or waist circumference by just a small amount may lower your risk significantly. You can decrease these numbers by exercising regularly and eating a healthy diet.

For more information about BMI or waist circumference, contact your health care provider or visit the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute at [www.nhlbisupport.com](http://www.nhlbisupport.com).



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