



Facts About Healthy Weight

Why Is a Healthy Weight Important?

Being overweight or obese increases your risk for many diseases and conditions. The more you weigh, the more likely you are to suffer from heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, gallbladder disease, sleep apnea, and certain cancers. On the other hand, a healthy weight has many benefits: It helps you lower your risk for developing these problems, helps you feel good about yourself, and gives you more energy to enjoy life.

What Is Your Risk?

Body Mass Index

Do you know your body mass index, or BMI? Your BMI accurately estimates your total body fat. The amount of fat that you carry is a good indicator of your risk for a variety of diseases.

To check your BMI, use the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) BMI calculator at www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/.

Although BMI can be used for most men and women, it does have some limitations:

- It may *overestimate* body fat in athletes and others who have a muscular build.
- It may *underestimate* body fat in older persons and others who have lost muscle.

Waist Circumference Measurement

Your waist circumference is also an important measurement to help you figure out your overall health risks. If most of your fat is around your waist, then you are more at risk for heart disease and diabetes.

This risk increases with a measurement that is greater than 35 inches for women or greater than 40 inches for men.

How To Lose Weight and Maintain It

Most people who try to lose weight focus on one thing: weight loss. However, if you set goals, eat healthy foods, and are physically active, then you may be more successful at losing weight.

Weight Loss Goals

Setting the right goals is an important first step to losing and maintaining weight.

- Losing just 5–10 percent of your current weight over 6 months will lower your risk for heart disease and other conditions.
- Losing 1–2 pounds per week is a reasonable and safe weight loss.
- Maintaining a modest weight loss over a longer period of time is better than losing a lot of weight and regaining it. You can think about additional weight loss after you've lost 10 percent of your current body weight and have kept it off for 6 months.

Maintaining a healthy weight calls for keeping a balance of energy. You must balance the calories or energy you get from food and beverages with the calories you use to keep your body going and to be physically active.

A Healthy Eating Plan

A healthy eating plan gives your body the nutrients it needs every day and helps you stay within your daily calorie level. Such an eating plan also will lower your risk for heart disease and other conditions.



A healthy eating plan:

- Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products
- Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts
- Is low in saturated fats, *trans* fat, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars
- Controls portion sizes

Cutting back on calories is also part of a healthy eating plan to lose weight. In general, eating plans that contain 1,000–1,200 calories each day will help most women lose weight safely. Eating plans that contain 1,200–1,600 calories each day are suitable for most men and also may be appropriate for women who weigh 165 pounds or more or who exercise regularly.

Physical Activity—How Much Should You Aim For?

Staying physically active and eating fewer calories will help you lose weight and keep the weight off over time. But people vary greatly in how much physical activity they need to reach their weight goals.

Some people can reach a stable weight by doing 150–300 minutes (2.5–5 hours) a week of moderate-intensity activity. Others need to do more than 300 minutes (5 hours) a week of moderate-intensity

activity to lose more than 5 percent of body weight and keep the weight off.

Either way, you don't have to do physical activity all at once. You can break up your physical activity into periods of at least 10 minutes and spread it throughout the week.

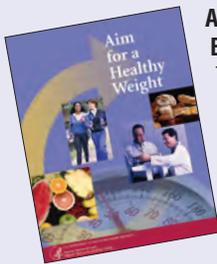
Learn More

More information on maintaining a healthy weight, and on overweight and obesity, is available from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) Web site at www.nhlbi.nih.gov (under Health Information for the Public) and at the Aim for a Healthy Weight Web site at <http://healthyweight.nhlbi.nih.gov>. Podcasts and Spanish-language articles also can be found in the online Diseases and Conditions Index at www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci.

Information on overweight prevention strategies for children and families can be found on the *We Can!* (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity and Nutrition) Web site at <http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov>.

You also can order or download NHLBI materials on overweight and obesity from the NHLBI Web site or by calling the NHLBI Health Information Center at 301–592–8573 (TTY: 240–629–3255).

Want More Information? These NHLBI resources will help you achieve and maintain a healthy weight!



Aim for a Healthy Weight Booklet (#05-5213)

This booklet provides practical, easy-to-use guidance for losing and maintaining weight. It includes portion and serving size information, sample reduced-calorie menus, a weekly food and activity diary, and more.

Visit the **Aim for a Healthy Weight** Web site at <http://healthyweight.nhlbi.nih.gov> to find an online BMI calculator and menu planner, as well as additional materials and resources for patients, the public, and health professionals.



Also of interest:

- **Facts About Healthy Weight (#06-5830)**
This fact sheet provides key information for losing and maintaining weight, including weight loss goals and tips on healthy eating and physical activity.



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**National Heart
Lung and Blood Institute**

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To Order: Visit www.nhlbi.nih.gov or <http://email.nhlbihin.net> or call **301–592–8573**

Body Mass Index Table

	Normal						Overweight					Obese						Extreme Obesity																		
BMI	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54
Height (inches)	Body Weight (pounds)																																			
58	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	148	153	158	162	167	172	177	181	186	191	196	201	205	210	215	220	224	229	234	239	244	248	253	258
59	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	173	178	183	188	193	198	203	208	212	217	222	227	232	237	242	247	252	257	262	267
60	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	174	179	184	189	194	199	204	209	215	220	225	230	235	240	245	250	255	261	266	271	276
61	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	164	169	174	180	185	190	195	201	206	211	217	222	227	232	238	243	248	254	259	264	269	275	280	285
62	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	169	175	180	186	191	196	202	207	213	218	224	229	235	240	246	251	256	262	267	273	278	284	289	295
63	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	175	180	186	191	197	203	208	214	220	225	231	237	242	248	254	259	265	270	278	282	287	293	299	304
64	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	180	186	192	197	204	209	215	221	227	232	238	244	250	256	262	267	273	279	285	291	296	302	308	314
65	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	186	192	198	204	210	216	222	228	234	240	246	252	258	264	270	276	282	288	294	300	306	312	318	324
66	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	192	198	204	210	216	223	229	235	241	247	253	260	266	272	278	284	291	297	303	309	315	322	328	334
67	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	198	204	211	217	223	230	236	242	249	255	261	268	274	280	287	293	299	306	312	319	325	331	338	344
68	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	203	210	216	223	230	236	243	249	256	262	269	276	282	289	295	302	308	315	322	328	335	341	348	354
69	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	209	216	223	230	236	243	250	257	263	270	277	284	291	297	304	311	318	324	331	338	345	351	358	365
70	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216	222	229	236	243	250	257	264	271	278	285	292	299	306	313	320	327	334	341	348	355	362	369	376
71	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222	229	236	243	250	257	265	272	279	286	293	301	308	315	322	329	338	343	351	358	365	372	379	386
72	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	228	235	242	250	258	265	272	279	287	294	302	309	316	324	331	338	346	353	361	368	375	383	390	397
73	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	235	242	250	257	265	272	280	288	295	302	310	318	325	333	340	348	355	363	371	378	386	393	401	408
74	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	241	249	256	264	272	280	287	295	303	311	319	326	334	342	350	358	365	373	381	389	396	404	412	420
75	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	248	256	264	272	279	287	295	303	311	319	327	335	343	351	359	367	375	383	391	399	407	415	423	431
76	156	164	172	180	189	197	205	213	221	230	238	246	254	263	271	279	287	295	304	312	320	328	336	344	353	361	369	377	385	394	402	410	418	426	435	443

Source: Adapted from *Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults: The Evidence Report*.