



## BMI: Body Mass Index

Body Mass Index (BMI) is regarded as the most useful tool to determine and classify obesity. It measures body fat according to height and weight, and correlates with a person's risk of disease and death. Calculating BMI is fast, inexpensive, and easy – go to <http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi> to figure out your BMI.

### BMI scores are classified as follows:

- Below - 18.5 Underweight
- 18.5 – 24.9 Healthy Weight
- 25.0 – 29.9 Overweight
- 30.0 – 40.0 Obese

BMI's most notable limitations are that it can overestimate body fat in people who are very muscular, such as athletes, and can underestimate body fat in persons who have lost muscle mass, such as the elderly. To stay healthy, you should always eat a variety of foods in proper portions. Consider the following tips:

- Make healthy choices a habit. Eat well, move more, and get support from family and friends to achieve an overall healthy lifestyle.
- Be realistic about your goals. If you try to reduce calories, fat, saturated fat and sugar while also increasing exercise, you may be setting yourself up for failure. Instead, set smaller,

more realistic goals and add new ones as you are successful.

- Keep a daily food and activity journal. Write down what you eat for meals and snacks, and keep track of any exercise you do. Also log where, when, and what you are feeling when you eat to help you identify your hunger triggers, and determine if what you ate satisfied your hunger.
- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables each day. Fruit and vegetables help promote health and reduce the risk for major chronic diseases. The right amount you should be eating depends on your age, sex, and activity level. See the Dietary Guidelines for Americans for details, or the Live Well, Work Well 4-part series "Fruits and Vegetables."
- Get your fiber! High-fiber foods help you feel full. Whole grain cereals, legumes, vegetables, and fruits are a good source of fiber that will help you feel full with fewer calories.
- Prepare and eat meals and snacks at home. You can save money, eat healthy, and spend quality time at home with

family.

- Be aware of proper portion sizes. Use a scale or measuring cup to be sure you are not eating too much of anything.
- Take your time when you eat. Eat only when you are hungry, and enjoy the tastes, textures, and smells of what you are eating. Do not eat in front of the television.
- Forgive yourself. You wouldn't be human if you didn't make mistakes along the way. Forgive your mistakes and keep working.
- Remember physical activity. Most people need at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity five or more days per week.



### Did you know...?

Using the BMI classifications, determine if you need to lose, maintain, or even gain weight. If you are overweight or obese, losing only 10 percent of your body weight can improve your health. Be sure to lose weight gradually; a loss of only one-half to two pounds per week is recommended.