



Assessing Your Weight and Health Risk



Assessment of weight and health risk involves using three key measures:

1. Body mass index (BMI)
2. Waist circumference
3. Risk factors for diseases and conditions associated with obesity

Body Mass Index (BMI)

BMI is a useful measure of overweight and obesity. It is calculated from your height and weight. BMI is an estimate of body fat and a good gauge of your risk for diseases that can occur with more body fat. The higher your BMI, the higher your risk for certain diseases such as heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, gallstones, breathing problems, and certain cancers.

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

- 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.

Use the BMI Table on the other side of this fact sheet to estimate your body fat. The BMI score means the following:

	BMI
Underweight	Below 18.5
Normal	18.5 – 24.9
Overweight	25.0 - 29.9
Obesity	30.0 and Above

Waist Circumference

Measuring waist circumference helps screen for possible health risks that come with overweight and obesity. If most of your fat is around your waist rather than at your hips, you're at a higher risk for heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

This risk goes up with a waist size that is greater than 35 inches for women or greater than 40 inches for men. To correctly measure your waist, stand and place a tape measure around your middle, just above your hipbones. Measure your waist just after you breathe out.

Risk Factors for Health Topics Associated With Obesity

Along with being overweight or obese, the following conditions will put you at greater risk for heart disease and other conditions:

Risk Factors

- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- High LDL cholesterol ("bad" cholesterol)
- Low HDL cholesterol ("good" cholesterol)
- High triglycerides
- High blood glucose (sugar)
- Family history of premature heart disease
- Physical inactivity
- Cigarette smoking

For people who are considered obese (BMI greater than or equal to 30) or those who are overweight (BMI of 25 to 29.9) and have two or more risk factors, it is recommended that you lose weight. Even a small weight loss (between 5 and 10 percent of your current weight) will help lower your risk of developing diseases associated with obesity. People who are overweight, do not have a high waist measurement, and have fewer than two risk factors may need to prevent further weight gain rather than lose weight.

Talk to your doctor to see whether you are at an increased risk and whether you should lose weight. Your doctor will evaluate your BMI, waist measurement, and other risk factors for heart disease.

The good news is even a small weight loss (between 5 and 10 percent of your current weight) will help lower your risk of developing those diseases.

(continued)

Body Mass Index Table

Normal							Overweight					Obese									
BMI	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39
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
59	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	173	178	183	188	193
60	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	174	179	184	189	194	199
61	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	164	169	174	180	185	190	195	201	206
62	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	169	175	180	186	191	196	202	207	213
63	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	175	180	186	191	197	203	208	214	220
64	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	180	186	192	197	204	209	215	221	227
65	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	186	192	198	204	210	216	222	228	234
66	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	192	198	204	210	216	223	229	235	241
67	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	198	204	211	217	223	230	236	242	249
68	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	203	210	216	223	230	236	243	249	256
69	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	209	216	223	230	236	243	250	257	263
70	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216	222	229	236	243	250	257	264	271
71	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222	229	236	243	250	257	265	272	279
72	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	228	235	242	250	258	265	272	279	287
73	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	235	242	250	257	265	272	280	288	295
74	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	241	249	256	264	272	280	287	295	303
75	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	216	216	224	232	240	248	256	264	272	279	287	295	303	311
76	156	164	172	180	189	197	205	221	221	230	238	246	254	263	271	279	287	295	304	312	320

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

The complete Body Mass Index Table (including extreme obesity):
www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/bmi_tbl.pdf



www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/risk.htm