



Calculating BMI

BMI stands for body mass index. It is a measure of body fat based on your height and weight. You can use this National Institutes of Health [tool](#) to calculate your BMI.

BMI categories:

Underweight = <18.5

Normal weight = 18.5-24.9

Overweight = 25-29.9

Obesity = 30 or greater.

Mary, in the example, had a BMI of 29 when she started her weight loss journey.

The BMI index is a helpful guide, but it is not the only way to measure your risk. Talk with your provider about your health risks and ideal weight goals.

Managing Your Weight For a Healthy Body and Mind

Carrying excess weight takes a toll on every part of the body. It affects walking, breathing, sleeping and mood, and can have a negative impact on quality of life. Being overweight can also increase the risk of developing serious medical conditions. The risk might rise from the stress the heart and joints suffer from carrying extra pounds. Or it may be due to complex changes in hormones and metabolism (how the body uses calories and fat).

It's not all bad news though. Losing as little as 5-10% of your body weight can significantly reduce the risks. Take Mary: she weighed 180 and lost 16 pounds (9% loss). As a result, she was able to safely stop one blood pressure medication. She says she now has more energy and feels more confident. It doesn't matter that she was 62 when she started managing her weight more carefully, it only matters that she did it! Plus, Mary feels motivated by her loss to keep working at it; her new goal is to get inside the ideal weight range for her age and height. Even if she doesn't get to her ideal weight, she's already cut down her risk for disease, and is spending less on medications.

These are some of the conditions associated with being overweight:

Excess body weight is highly linked to [type 2 diabetes](#). The Nurses' Health Study of 114,000 women for 14 years found that women with a BMI (see box) of 35 or higher were

93 times more likely to develop diabetes than women with BMIs lower than 22. Fat cells secrete hormones and other chemicals that cause inflammation. Too much inflammation can disrupt how the body breaks down fatty foods and empty carbohydrates. And it causes the body to use insulin less effectively. Insulin is the hormone made by the pancreas to control sugar levels in the blood. These factors combined can cause blood sugar levels to rise to dangerous levels. While diabetes can be controlled with careful blood sugar monitoring, medication, and diet and exercise changes, it is always better to prevent it from developing when possible.

[Heart disease](#) is the leading cause of death in the U.S. It includes coronary artery disease (CAD), heart attack, congestive heart failure and other conditions that affect the heart. The BMI-CAD Collaboration Investigators studied 300,000 people for 16 years. Overweight participants had a 32% higher risk of developing CAD than those within a normal weight range; obese participants had an 81% higher risk.

Heart disease can be prevented or managed by not smoking, lowering cholesterol, controlling high blood pressure, maintaining a healthy weight and exercising. Carrying extra weight makes the heart and lungs work harder to pump blood and oxygen throughout the body. Losing weight can help lower blood

Mindful Eating

The typical American lifestyle involves rushed meals on-the-go. When we eat while doing other tasks, it is easy to eat quickly and mindlessly. Have you ever reached for another bite only to realize you've eaten the whole thing and didn't even really taste it?

Mindful eating means paying attention while eating, enjoying tastes and textures, and recognizing when you feel satisfied. It means making time to eat without multi-tasking. Serve yourself reasonably-sized portions on smaller plates to make your meals look plenty big.

Mindful eating tip 1: Sit down, pay attention to smells and tastes, chew your food slowly and fully.

Mindful eating tip 2: When having a snack, serve yourself a portion, rather than eating out of a bag.

Mindful eating tip 3: If you are not satisfied after a meal, add extra vegetables to your plate.

Mindful eating tip 4: Stop eating when you've reached a comfortable level of fullness.

pressure and cholesterol. Exercise is an important part of any weight loss program but be sure to start slowly and set reasonable goals.

Arthritis and back, knee and joint pain are more likely to occur as body weight increases. Excess weight strains bones, muscles and joints and is associated with osteoarthritis of the knee and hip, back pain, lower limb pain, and disability from muscle and bone conditions.

Being overweight may cause more fat to be stored around the neck. This can cause inflammation that makes the airway smaller and breathing harder. Excess neck fat is a risk factor for sleep apnea. With sleep apnea, breathing can pause or stop for short periods during sleep. It's also often linked to snoring, poor sleep, high blood pressure and other serious health concerns.

Taking Charge

There are many ways to get on the path to a healthier weight, and healthier you. Losing weight often means rebooting your relationship with food: keeping unhealthy foods out of sight, learning to eat mindfully and asking others for support. The first step is to develop a meal plan that outlines healthy meals and snacks. Your provider, a registered dietician or your KnovaSolutions clinician can help with this.

Weight loss experts recommend keeping a food diary, a log of what you eat each day. Kaiser Permanente studied 1,700 people and found that those who kept daily food records lost twice as much weight as those who didn't.

Keeping a food diary helps you avoid eating things that aren't on your "menu." Write down what and how much you eat (1/3 cup of almonds, 1 orange) and when. Note where you eat, with whom, if you did anything while you ate (watched tv, worked), and what your mood was (happy, sad, bored). Include drinks and extras such as sauces or condiments.

Sometimes people use food to deal with stress, boredom or anxiety. While this type of eating may provide comfort in the short-run, it can lead to feelings of regret and guilt. Try to identify what your triggers are (the junk food aisles at the store, being alone) and then problem-solve to see how you can break old habits. For example, if the junk food aisles are a trigger, stay out of the center of the store and keep to the walls where the "real" food is.

If eating alone makes you more likely to overeat, spend more time with family or friends. Tell them why you need them now and how they can help. Or make plans for an activity after a meal so less time is spent alone or without anything to do. People trying to lose weight often find that trying new activities, like joining a club or taking up a hobby, helps with staying true to the goal.

Speaking of family and friends, social support is key. You may need emotional support when you're feeling discouraged or you may need practical support, such as help with the kids while you exercise. You will also benefit by having a pal to share healthy recipes and meals with or someone to walk with at lunch time.

How to say NO to food-pushers? Try "No thanks." If that isn't enough, try "No thanks, I'm on a special diet" or "I'm trying to lose a few pounds." Ask if the office candy dish could be moved to a less tempting spot, or move it yourself.

Last but not least, be encouraging and forgiving! Don't talk negatively towards yourself. Just because you overdid it last night doesn't mean you can't get back on track today. Set realistic expectations for yourself and update them as you hit your goals. KnovaSolutions offers support as you work towards your health goals. Let us help you get there; call us at **800/355-0885**, M-F, 8 am-8 pm, MT.

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