



FACTSHEET

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT - USEFUL FACTS

BODY MASS INDEX



<18.4	18.5 - 25	25 - 29	>30
UNDERWEIGHT	HEALTHY	OVERWEIGHT	OBESE

Body Mass Index

The Body Mass Index (*BMI*) is a tool which is used to indicate whether an individual's weight is within a healthy range. It is calculated by dividing the weight in kilograms by the square of the height in metres.

For example: Weight 80kgs, height 1.85

$$80 / (1.85 \times 1.85) = 23.37$$

Generally a figure of less than **18.4** is considered underweight, while anything between, **18.5 - 25** is ideal. A figure of **over 25** is considered overweight, while a figure of **over 30** is

considered obese though most people prefer to say '*comfortably plump!*'

(Note the BMI calculation is not suitable for children, athletes, pregnant and nursing women)

- There are health problems associated with being overweight such as heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers. For this reason individuals are advised to keep their weight within a healthy range.
- It's important to highlight that the fat distribution is more important than the BMI. Fat which is stored around the middle is known as visceral fat and this is linked to a greater risk of ill-health. For example, if your BMI is within the ideal range but you have a high level of visceral fat, you are likely to be more at risk of health issues than an individual with a higher BMI and lower visceral fat levels.

A better measure of health is the height/waist indicator. Your waist circumference in cms should measure between 40-50% of your height in cms. So, if your waist measurement is more than 50% of your height, you may be carrying excessive visceral fat.

For example:

- Height 1.6m, waist, 75 cm = **healthy**
- Height 1.8m, waist - 95 cm = **increased risk of ill health**

Being slightly overweight (*BMI 25-27*) is not generally linked to any additional health risk. The problem seems to be that as the weight creeps on it is more likely to be stored as visceral fat.



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There is unfortunately no magic potion to help us lose weight. It involves eating a healthy diet and moving as much as possible!

The average **women needs 2000** calories a day to maintain her weight and the average **man 2500 calories**. 0.5 kgs or 1 lb of fat has an energy value of 3500 calories. Therefore, if a woman/man eats 500 calories a day less, by the end of the week she/he will have burnt (*in theory*) 3500 calories and have lost 1 lb/0.5kgs.

- The quality of your food counts more than the calories. For example some foods such as refined carbohydrates and sugars tend to encourage us to 'store' excess energy because of their effect on our blood sugar and insulin levels.

For example, if you ate 1500 calories of chocolate compared to 1500 calories of fish, vegetables and brown rice, you might be more likely to 'store' the chocolate, even though it has the same calories as the fish and vegetable option!

- 85% of people who lose weight regain it (*very depressing!*) and this 'feast

and famine' cycle is both damaging psychologically and biologically (*the body can respond by lowering the metabolic rate in response to long periods of low food intake*).

For optimal and permanent weight loss.

- Focus on health, rather than weight.
- Aim for a steady and permanent weight loss by changing your eating habits and following a healthy and nutritious diet.
- Set realistic weight loss goals (eg 2-3 kgs over 1 month).
- Weigh yourself once a month at the same time.
- Don't be disappointed if the scales do not always move downwards. As long as your weight is not steadily going up this is progress!

