

Healthy Weight, Healthy You

Did you know that being overweight or underweight can increase your risk of health problems?

Research has shown excess weight is a serious health problem for many Americans, increasing their risk of developing a number of serious illnesses, including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, and high blood pressure. Being underweight is linked with heart problems, lowered resistance to infection, chronic fatigue, anemia, depression and other illnesses. The good news: healthful eating and regular physical activity can help to prevent these illnesses. Managing your weight plays a vital role in achieving and maintaining good health while enhancing the quality of your life. The key is to achieve and maintain your realistic healthy weight through proper food choices and regular physical activity. By making changes in your habits—including eating and physical activity—you can help achieve long-term health and lifelong weight management.

But what is a healthy weight?

Your healthy weight is likely to be quite different from anyone else's. A variety of factors influence your weight, including your genes (which play a role in determining your body size and shape), physical activity, age, dieting history, and the foods you eat. Whether your weight is healthy depends on where your body fat is located, how much of your weight is fat, and whether you have weight-related health problems, such as diabetes or high blood pressure. Most people fall within the range of weights in the chart that follows.

Use the following guidelines to judge if your weight is healthy:

Body shape

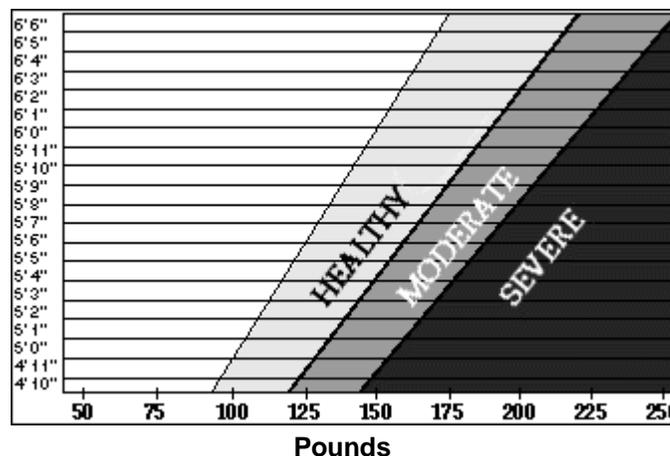
Are you apple-shaped with more fat on your upper body (around your abdomen), or pear-shaped with fat gathering on your lower body (on the buttocks or thighs)? Excess weight below the waist creates a pear-shaped body and does not appear to pose as much risk for weight-related health problems as weight carried above the waist.

Weight tables

The chart offers some guidelines for determining a reasonable weight range based on height. Because muscle and bone weigh more than fat, the higher weights in the range typically apply to those with more muscle and a larger frame. People with less muscle and a smaller frame will fall at the lower end of the range. Weights above and below the ranges are associated with increased incidence of disease and disability.

Are you a healthy weight?

Height



Source: US Department of Agriculture, US Department of Health and Human Services. *Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, 4th ed., 1995.

Where do I start?

First, use the guidelines provided to see if you are within a healthy weight range. If you need to lose or gain weight, ask for support. Sources can include family, friends, and a registered dietitian. Your success at reaching these goals may depend on improved regular physical activity and eating habits. A registered dietitian can help you set a reasonable weight goal and recommend an approach that's right for you.

For more information

- Contact your local **Health and Wellness Center or Dietitian**.

- **The American Dietetic Association/National Center for Nutrition and Dietetics Consumer Nutrition Hotline**

For food and nutrition information or for a referral to a registered dietitian in your area, call 800/366-1655.

- Order a copy of ADA's ***The Healthy Weigh: A Practical Food Guide***. This weight control booklet includes 62 recipes and a week of menu ideas. Catalog no. 0808, \$6.25 each plus \$5.00 shipping and handling. Call 800/877-1600 ext 5000, weekdays 8:30am-4:45pm CST.

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