

BODY MASS INDEX

Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight can reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and more. One tool for assessing healthy weight is body mass index or BMI.

BMI is based on height and weight. While it compares well to percent (%) body fat, it is not the same measurement and should not be used to interpret % body fat. In other words, a BMI of 22 is not the same as 22% body fat. BMI is not a diagnostic tool by itself, but is used to screen for health risk. BMI is categorized as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Underweight: | Less than 18.5 |
| Healthy: | 18.5 - 24.9 |
| Overweight: | 25 - 29.9 |
| Obese: | 30 - 39.9 |
| Extreme Obesity: | 40 and above |

FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN USING BMI...

- ◆ Age and gender affect the relationship between body fat and BMI. At any given BMI:
 - % body fat increases with age.
 - Women have a higher % body fat than men.
- ◆ A BMI within the healthy/normal range does not necessarily mean you are aerobically fit.
- ◆ BMI is not a suitable tool for:
 - *Under 18 years of age.* There are separate and specific BMI charts for ages 2-18.
 - *Body builders and competitive athletes.* A low % body fat and high BMI may reflect a greater amount of lean body mass.
 - *Pregnant and nursing women.*
 - *Frail or sedentary elderly people.*

WAIST CIRCUMFERENCE

Many people are concerned that BMI may classify them as overweight or obese with associated health risks when in fact they are not. For this reason, it is recommended to measure waist size in addition to BMI. Body fat around the abdomen increases the risk of chronic diseases, whereas weight carried below the waistline poses less risk. These body shapes are often referred to as "apple" and "pear."

To measure your waist, place the measuring tape horizontally across the abdomen and the top of the upper hip bone. Keep the tape parallel to the floor. Be sure the tape is snug but does not compress the skin. Measure your waist after exhaling normally.

| Waist Circumference | Pear  | Apple  |
|---------------------|--|---|
| MEN: | 40" or Less | More than 40" |
| WOMEN: | 35" or Less | More than 35" |

RISK OF DISEASE

| BMI | | PEAR  | APPLE  |
|------------|-----------------|--|---|
| <18.5 | Underweight | | |
| 18.5-24.9 | Healthy | Lowest | Possible** |
| 25.0-29.9 | Overweight | Increased | High |
| 30.0-34.9 | Obese | High | Very High |
| 35.0-39.9 | Obese | Very High | Very High |
| 40 or More | Extremely Obese | Extremely High | Extremely High |

**BMI less than 25 may still be associated with an unhealthy amount of body fat. Additional measurements may be needed to determine body fat and health risk.

For More Information:

- www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/bmi-adult.htm
- http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/risk.htm
- Contact your local HAWC or Dietitian.

YOUR WEIGHT & HEALTH RISK



BODY MASS INDEX WAIST CIRCUMFERENCE



