



ToYourHealth

WELCOA'S ONLINE GENERAL WELLNESS BULLETIN

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 a BMI calculator or BMI table to estimate your body fat. Here's how BMI scores are broken down:

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

Your Weight & 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.



Next Page
↓



To Your Health

WELCOA'S ONLINE GENERAL WELLNESS BULLETIN

Continued from previous page

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.

Behaviors That Will Help You Lose Weight and Maintain It

Set the Right Goals

Setting the right goals is an important first step. Most people trying to lose weight focus on just that one goal: weight loss. However, the most productive areas to focus on are the dietary and physical activity changes that will lead to long-term weight change. Successful weight managers are those who select two or three goals at a time that are manageable.

Reward Success (But Not With Food)

An effective reward is something that is desirable, timely, and dependent on meeting your goal. The rewards you choose may be material (e.g., a movie or music CD, or a payment toward buying a more costly item) or an act of self-kindness (e.g., an afternoon off from work or just an hour of quiet time away from family). Frequent small rewards, earned for meeting smaller goals, are more effective than bigger rewards that require a long, difficult effort.

Balance Your Food Checkbook

“Self-monitoring” refers to observing and recording some aspect of your behavior, such as calorie intake, servings of fruits and vegetables, amount of physical activity, etc., or an outcome of these behaviors, such as weight. Self-monitoring

of a behavior can be used at times when you’re not sure how you’re doing, and at times when you want the behavior to improve. Self-monitoring of a behavior usually moves you closer to the desired direction and can produce “real-time” records for review by you and your health care provider. For example, keeping a record of your physical activity can let you and your provider know quickly how you’re doing. When the record shows that your activity is increasing, you’ll be encouraged to keep it up. Some patients find that specific self-monitoring forms make it easier, while others prefer to use their own recording system.

