

# How the Body Mass Index (BMI) Can Help You Stay Healthy

## General Information

The body mass index (BMI) is a measure of body fat based on height and weight. Your total body fat is related to your risk of obesity and indicates your risk of diseases and death related to obesity.

These diseases include diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, arthritis, respiratory disorders, high cholesterol and certain cancers. If your BMI score indicates you are at risk for such diseases, there are things you can do to reduce your risk and protect your health.

If you are like most people, BMI is a reliable way to calculate your total body fat. However, if you are athletic and have a muscular build, BMI may overestimate the amount of body fat you have. If you are older or have lost muscle mass, it may underestimate your amount of body fat.

## Calculating Your BMI Score

An easy way to find your BMI score is to look at the BMI chart on the back. Find your height in inches and move across that row to your weight range. Then find your BMI score at the top of your weight range column. For example, if your height is 62 inches and your weight is 136 to 141 pounds, your BMI score is 25. (A BMI calculator is also available on [allinahealth.org](http://allinahealth.org) or [nhlbi.nih.gov](http://nhlbi.nih.gov).)

## What Your BMI Score Means

There are five categories of BMI scores:

- less than 18.5 — underweight
- 18.5 to 24.9 — normal weight
- 25 to 29.9 — overweight
- 30 to 39.9 — obese
- 40 or more — extreme obese

## Other Indicators of Risk for Obesity-related Diseases

If you have a BMI score in the overweight, obese or extreme obese range, your health care provider may use two other indicators to assess your risk:

- the size of your waist, which may tell if you are at risk for heart disease and other problems. Your risk increases with the amount of abdominal fat you have. You have a higher risk of disease if you are a woman with a waist greater than 35 inches or a man with a waist greater than 40 inches.
  - To measure your waist, put a measuring tape snugly around your waist (where you bend). Breathe out and measure.
- the presence of certain other conditions including:
  - high blood pressure
  - high LDL cholesterol (the “bad” cholesterol)
  - low HDL cholesterol (the “good” cholesterol)
  - high triglycerides
  - high blood glucose (sugar)
  - family history of premature heart disease
  - physical inactivity
  - cigarette smoking.

If you are at increased risk for obesity-related diseases and you should lose weight, talk with your provider. Even a small weight loss (just 10 percent of your current weight) will help you lower your risk of developing diseases associated with obesity.

**(over)**

# BMI Chart

BMI	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54		
Height (in.)	Weight (pounds)																																					
58	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	148	153	158	162	167	172	177	181	186	191	196	201	205	210	215	220	224	229	234	239	244	248	253	258		
59	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	173	178	183	188	193	198	203	208	212	217	222	227	232	237	242	247	252	257	262	267		
60	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	174	179	184	189	194	199	204	209	215	220	225	230	235	240	245	250	255	261	266	271	276		
61	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	164	169	174	180	185	190	195	201	206	211	217	222	227	232	238	243	248	254	259	264	269	275	280	285		
62	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	169	175	180	186	191	196	202	207	213	218	224	229	235	240	246	251	256	262	267	273	278	284	289	295		
63	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	175	180	186	191	197	203	208	214	220	225	231	237	242	248	254	259	265	270	278	282	287	293	299	304		
64	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	180	186	192	197	204	209	215	221	227	232	238	244	250	256	262	267	273	279	285	291	296	302	308	314		
65	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	186	192	198	204	210	216	222	228	234	240	246	252	258	264	270	276	282	288	294	300	306	312	318	324		
66	118	124	130	135	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	192	198	204	210	216	223	230	236	242	249	256	263	270	277	284	291	297	304	311	318	324	331	338	345		
67	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	198	204	211	217	223	230	236	242	249	255	261	268	274	280	287	293	299	306	312	319	325	331	338	344		
68	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	203	210	216	223	230	236	243	249	256	262	269	276	282	289	295	302	308	315	322	328	335	341	348	354		
69	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	209	216	223	230	236	243	250	257	263	270	277	284	291	297	304	311	318	324	331	338	345	351	358	365		
70	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216	222	229	236	243	250	257	264	271	278	285	292	299	306	313	320	327	334	341	348	355	362	369	376		
71	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222	229	236	243	250	257	265	272	279	286	293	301	308	315	322	329	338	343	351	358	365	372	379	386		
72	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	228	235	242	250	258	265	272	279	287	294	302	309	316	324	331	338	346	353	361	368	375	383	390	397		
73	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	235	242	250	257	265	272	280	288	295	302	310	318	325	333	340	348	355	363	371	378	386	393	401	408		
74	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	241	249	256	264	272	280	287	295	303	311	319	326	334	342	350	358	365	373	381	389	396	404	412	420		
75	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	248	256	264	272	279	287	295	303	311	319	327	335	343	351	359	367	375	383	391	399	407	415	423	431		
76	156	164	172	180	189	197	205	213	221	230	238	246	254	263	271	279	287	295	304	312	320	328	336	344	353	361	369	377	385	394	402	410	418	426	435	443		

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