

HEALTHY WEIGHT

Facts for Families

What about My Own Weight? *The Parent's Guide to a Healthy Weight*

The rapid increase in overweight children in the last 20-30 years indicates that the problem isn't caused as much by genetic factors as it is by poor eating habits and decreased physical activity, both of which are modeled in the home.

A child can't be expected to make healthy changes alone. Family habits, which are often established by parents, have a profound effect on children's weight. Studies indicate that only about 9 percent of children of lean parents become obese adults, whereas 60 to 80 percent of children of obese parents become obese adults.

Are you overweight? For adults, the Body Mass Index (BMI) charts are the recommended measurement tool for assessing weight (see pp. 2-3). BMI charts compare weight relative to height and when used in conjunction with a waist circumference

measurement, a BMI score it is one of the best ways to determine whether you are overweight or obese.

How does your weight affect your health?

The Bad News: Being overweight puts you at much greater risk for a number of serious conditions including:

- ▶▶ Diabetes
- ▶▶ Heart disease and stroke
- ▶▶ Cancer
- ▶▶ Sleep apnea (breathing difficulty when sleeping)
- ▶▶ Osteoarthritis
- ▶▶ Gallbladder disease
- ▶▶ Fatty liver disease




A weight loss of about five percent of body weight, or 10 pounds for a 200 pound person, can mean big improvements in health. You may want to lose more weight to look better, but remember that even a small amount of weight loss can greatly improve your health.

Toward a Healthy Weight: Getting Started

If you are overweight and/or you have health conditions that are associated with being overweight, you may be eligible for weight loss advice and support. Check with a benefits manager, the employee assistance program or a health care provider for more information about services that are available. If you would like to seek professional advice on your own about healthy eating, visit the American Dietetic Association's referral service at www.eatright.org. If you would like to consult with a professional about safely increasing your level of physical activity, most YMCAs and health clubs offer individualized fitness assessments and can help you develop safe, sustainable exercise routines.



Use the BMI table below to estimate your total body fat. Once you know your BMI score, consult this chart to determine your weight range:

	Underweight » BMI below 18.5
	Healthy Weight » BMI 18.5–24.9
	Overweight » BMI 25–29.9
	Obese » BMI 30 and above

The Good News: Even moderate weight loss will:

- » Reduce risk of getting diabetes and improve management of blood sugar; some diabetics can reduce medication.
- » Reduce risk of heart disease and stroke—losing as little as 5 to 15 percent of your body weight can improve your blood pressure, cholesterol levels, inflammation in your whole body, and improve how your heart works and blood flows.
- » Reduce risk of cancers of the colon, esophagus, kidney, uterus and breast by either remaining at a healthy weight or losing weight and keeping it off if you are overweight.
- » Reduce sleep apnea by reducing neck size and lessening inflammation. Sleep apnea causes daytime sleepiness, snoring, difficulty concentrating and sometimes heart failure.

Body Mass Index Charts

To use this table, find your height in the left-hand column labeled “Height”. Then move across the chart until you reach the number closest to your weight (pounds have been rounded off). From there, move up to the top of the chart. This number is your BMI.

BMI	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
Height (inches)	Body Weight (pounds)																
58	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	148	153	158	162	167
59	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	173
60	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	174	179
61	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	164	169	174	180	185
62	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	169	175	180	186	191
63	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	175	180	186	191	197
64	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	180	186	192	197	204
65	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	186	192	198	204	210
66	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	192	198	204	210	216
67	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	198	204	211	217	223
68	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	203	210	216	223	230
69	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	209	216	223	230	236
70	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216	222	229	236	243
71	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222	229	236	243	250
72	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	228	235	242	250	258
73	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	235	242	250	257	265
74	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	241	249	256	264	272
75	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	248	256	264	272	279
76	156	164	172	180	189	197	205	213	221	230	238	246	254	263	271	279	287

Increasing Physical Activity + Eating Healthy Foods = Weight Loss

- ▶▶ Reduce stress on joints and inflammation to improve symptoms in people with osteoarthritis.
- ▶▶ Reduce risk of gall stones through small, steady weight loss. Rapid weight loss can temporarily raise risk of gall stones.
- ▶▶ Reduce the level of fat in your liver, which occurs more often in overweight people.

Toward a Healthy Weight: Getting Started

We have all heard the latest diet advice on TV, in newspapers, magazines and bookstores. Most diets and weight loss programs boast about their success stories, which can make sorting out all the advice very overwhelming. Weight loss experts agree that there is no single approach that will work for everyone, but the approaches that work have certain things

in common. Experts agree the best way to lose weight and to keep it off is to increase physical activity and eat a healthy diet. Weight-loss programs should encourage these healthy habits and help you keep them over time. Some features to look for in a safe weight-loss program are:

- ▶▶ Eating plans that reduce calories, but do not rule out specific foods.
- ▶▶ Regular physical activity and exercise instruction.
- ▶▶ Slow, steady weight-loss of about 1 to 2 pounds a week; not more than 3 pounds a week.
- ▶▶ Medical care, if you are following a very low-calorie diet.
- ▶▶ A plan to keep the weight off long-term.

36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54
Body Weight (pounds)																		
172	177	181	186	191	196	201	205	210	215	220	224	229	234	239	244	248	253	258
178	183	188	193	198	203	208	212	217	222	227	232	237	242	247	252	257	262	267
184	189	194	199	204	209	215	220	225	230	235	240	245	250	255	261	266	271	276
190	195	201	206	211	217	222	227	232	238	243	248	254	259	264	269	275	280	285
196	202	207	213	218	224	229	235	240	246	251	256	262	267	273	278	284	289	295
203	208	214	220	225	231	237	242	248	254	259	265	270	278	282	287	293	299	304
209	215	221	227	232	238	244	250	256	262	267	273	279	285	291	296	302	308	314
216	222	228	234	240	246	252	258	264	270	276	282	288	294	300	306	312	318	324
223	229	235	241	247	253	260	266	272	278	284	291	297	303	309	315	322	328	334
230	236	242	249	255	261	268	274	280	287	293	299	306	312	319	325	331	338	344
236	243	249	256	262	269	276	282	289	295	302	308	315	322	328	335	341	348	354
243	250	257	263	270	277	284	291	297	304	311	318	324	331	338	345	351	358	365
250	257	264	271	278	285	292	299	306	313	320	327	334	341	348	355	362	369	376
257	265	272	279	286	293	301	308	315	322	329	338	343	351	358	365	372	379	386
265	272	279	287	294	302	309	316	324	331	338	346	353	361	368	375	383	390	397
272	280	288	295	302	310	318	325	333	340	348	355	363	371	378	386	393	401	408
280	287	295	303	311	319	326	334	342	350	358	365	373	381	389	396	404	412	420
287	295	303	311	319	327	335	343	351	359	367	375	383	391	399	407	415	423	431
295	304	312	320	328	336	344	353	361	369	377	385	394	402	410	418	426	435	443

When considering a weight loss program, consider these key questions:

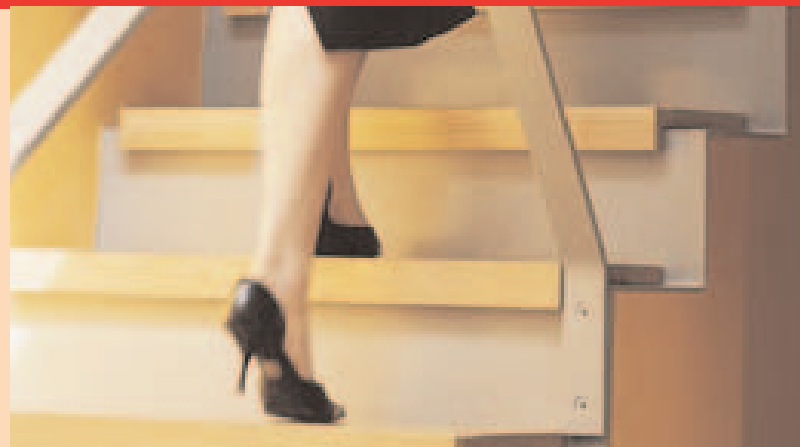
- » What exactly does the “diet” part of the program consist of? Is it counseling or classes? Is there a food plan? Do you keep food records? Do you purchase special food or supplements?
- » What exactly does the “exercise” part of the program consist of? Do you follow a specific plan? Is there instruction or are you just encouraged to exercise?
- » Who supervises the program? What training and experience do they have?
- » Does the program or any necessary diet products have risks? What are they? Do participants talk to a medical professional? Will the program work with your own doctor if you are taking any medicine or have any medical conditions?
- » How much will it cost? Is there a fee for classes? Food? Supplements? Medical tests?
- » How much weight does the average participant lose? What percent of participants complete the program?
- » Are there references from people who have been through the program?

Little changes mean a lot

American adults tend to gain 2 pounds a year on average. A change of just 100 calories a day can stop that weight gain. Making a painless daily change like walking a little farther or eating a little bit less can help you maintain a healthy weight. Better yet, eating 100 fewer calories AND burning 100 extra calories a day can mean a 10-20 pound weight loss in a year!

10 Easy Ways to Reduce 100 calories

- » Eat 2 cookies, not 5
- » Use cooking spray, not butter or margarine
- » Use a little all-fruit jam instead of butter on toast
- » Use vinegar or lemon juice on salad or just a little low fat salad dressing
- » Drink 4-6 ounces of juice instead of 8-12 ounces
- » Eat half a slice of cake
- » Eat 1/2 cup of ice cream, instead of 1 cup
- » Leave 3 bites of your hamburger
- » Skip a glass of beer, wine or liquor
- » Skip the cheese on your sandwich



10 Easy Ways to Burn 100 calories

- » Vacuum for 20 minutes
- » Walk briskly for 15 minutes
- » Jog for 11 minutes
- » Ride a bike continuously for 10 minutes
- » Swim for 13 minutes
- » Jump rope for 9 minutes
- » Work in the garden for 30 minutes
- » Participate in a video workout for 15 minutes
- » Walk up stairs for 15 minutes
- » Wash the car for 25 minutes



The Business Group's tool kit, *Reducing Child and Adolescent Obesity*, is made possible by support from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau of the Health Resources and Services Administration, Health and Human Services. Read all of the fact sheets in this series to learn about the many ways overweight can be prevented and treated. The series is available at www.businessgrouphealth.org/prevention/et_childobesity.cfm