

ARE YOU AT A HEALTHY WEIGHT? WHAT IS YOUR BODY MASS INDEX?



Note: This chart is for adults (aged 20 years and older).

Source: U.S. Surgeon General

What is BMI?

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a number calculated from a person's weight and height. BMI is a reliable indicator of body fatness for people. BMI does not measure body fat directly, but research has shown that BMI correlates to direct measures of body fat, such as underwater weighing and dual energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA).^{1, 2} BMI can be considered an alternative for direct measures of body fat. Additionally, BMI is an inexpensive and easy-to-perform method of screening for weight categories that may lead to health problems.

How is BMI used?

BMI is used as a screening tool to identify possible weight problems for adults. However, BMI is not a diagnostic tool. For example, a person may have a high BMI. However, to determine if excess weight is a health risk, a healthcare provider would need to perform further assessments.

Calculating BMI is one of the best methods for population assessment of overweight and obesity. Because calculation requires only height and weight, it is inexpensive and easy to use for clinicians and for the general public. The use of BMI allows people to compare their own weight status to that of the general population.