



# MEASURING A HEALTHY WEIGHT



This information sheet provides practical information for employees who want to reach a healthier weight:

- Check your BMI and Waist Circumference.
- Calculate your daily calorie allowance based on your activity levels.
- Find out how many calories you should be consuming to maintain your current weight or to lose weight.

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## WEIGHT RANGES



This provides practical information for employees who are looking for help with reaching a healthier weight. It explains how to work out if a person's weight is increasing his or her risk of developing certain health conditions.

Research shows that reaching and keeping to a healthy weight can cut your risk of developing coronary heart disease.

Please remember that weight can be a very sensitive issue for many people and care is needed when deciding how to present the information to employees.

### Calculating healthy weight ranges

There are a number of different methods that can be used to advise employees on standard or healthy weights for adults. These include:

- **Body mass index (BMI)**
  - This is a measurement that considers the relationship between your weight and your height and gives an estimate of your risk of developing weight-related diseases.
- **Waist circumference (also known as waist measurement)**
  - Research has found that central obesity (weight stored around the waist) increases the risk of developing conditions such as heart disease and Type 2 diabetes.

Information for employees on both these methods is given in this information sheet, along with some guidelines on how to calculate daily calorie requirements for anyone wanting to lose weight.

### Body mass index

This is a measurement that considers the relationship between your weight and your height and gives an estimate of your risk of developing weight-related disease.

### To calculate your body mass index (BMI):

1. Measure your height in metres (without shoes) and your weight in kilograms (without shoes).
2. Multiply the figure for your height by itself.
3. Divide your weight (in kilos) by the figure in step 2.

Example: Height – **1.6 m** (5 feet 3 inches)  
Weight – **70kg** (11 stone)

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{70}{(1.6 \times 1.6)} = \frac{70}{2.56} = 27$$

Category	BMI	Action needed
<b>Underweight</b>	Below 18.5	Seek advice on a weight management programme as you may need to gain weight.
<b>Ideal</b>	18.5 to 24.9	You're a healthy weight so maintain current levels of physical activity and calorie intake.
<b>Overweight</b>	25 to 29.9	Start to increase your level of physical activity and reduce calorie intake.
<b>Very overweight/ Obese</b>	30 or above	Seek advice on a weight management programme.

### The BMI is a useful measure, but remember it is only a guide and it does have some limitations:

- It is only for adults over 18.
- It doesn't apply to pregnant women.
- The thresholds for the categories differ slightly with gender and race.
- It doesn't take into account adults with a very athletic build (e.g. professional athletes) because muscle weighs more than fat.
- Talk to your doctor or practice nurse if you have any questions about your BMI.

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## ARE YOU A HEALTHY SHAPE?

As well as checking your BMI it is also important to measure your waist size. Your shape, as much as your weight, can affect your health risk. Fat around your middle can increase your risk of getting heart disease, cancer and type 2 diabetes. That's because these fat cells produce toxic substances that cause damage to your body.

You can work out if you're at increased risk by simply measuring your waist. Find the bottom of your ribs and the top of your hips, and measure around your middle at a point mid-way between these. For many people this will be at the level of the tummy button. Remember not to breathe in.

The table below shows the waist measurements that indicate an increased risk of developing some health conditions.

	Increased risk	Severe risk
<b>Men</b> (white European)	Over 94cm (37")	over 102cm (40")
<b>Men</b> (African-Caribbean, South Asian and some other minority ethnic groups)	—	over 90cm (35.5")
<b>Women</b> (white European)	Over 80cm (32")	over 88cm (35")
<b>Women</b> (African-Caribbean, South Asian and some other minority ethnic groups)	—	over 80cm (32")

### Why are there different measurements for people of different ethnicities?

Research shows that if you're South Asian, African-Caribbean, Black African, Chinese, Middle Eastern or have parents of two or more different ethnic groups, you may be at increased risk of some health conditions at a lower BMI than people from white European backgrounds. This means the measurements that indicate severe risk are lower for people from these groups.

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# MEASURING A HEALTHY WEIGHT

## CALORIE REQUIREMENTS

Managing your calorie intake is important for weight control:

- When your calorie intake exceeds your calorie expenditure, your weight will increase.
- When your calorie intake matches your calorie expenditure, your weight will remain constant.
- When your calorie intake is less than your calorie expenditure, you will lose weight.

If you're overweight and need to reduce your calorie intake, work out your daily calorie requirement by following the three steps below.

### Step 1

Work out your personal resting metabolic rate (RMR) by doing the calculation on the table below.

### Step 2

Work out your current activity level.

**Inactive:** Mainly sitting down all day and evening = **1.3**

**Lightly active:** Some activity – for example, walking, housework and general chores = **1.4**

**Moderately active:** Active most of the day and taking part in moderate-intensity activity three or more times a week = **1.5**

### Step 3

Calculate your daily calorie allowance:

**Daily calorie allowance =**  
**Resting metabolic rate (RMR) x Activity level**

This is the number of calories you can consume each day to maintain your current weight.

**To lose weight**, you must reduce your calorie intake by 500-600 calories per day.

Limiting your calorie intake can result in a reduction of the nutritional value of your meals, so seek advice before making changes to your diet.

Joining a weight management group can help to keep you motivated and provide you with lots of support and ideas.

Another alternative to reducing your calorie intake is to increase your level of physical activity so that you use up more calories. See the BHF booklet **Get active, stay active** for suggestions on how to increase your level of activity.

A combination of a healthy diet and doing more physical activity will have the best outcome!

Age	Men	Women
18-29 years	15.3 x weight (in kilos) + 679	14.7 x weight (in kilos) + 496
30-59 years	11.6 x weight (in kilos) + 879	8.7 x weight (in kilos) + 829
60 years or over	13.5 x weight (in kilos) + 487	10.5 x weight (in kilos) + 596

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