

BMI

What you need to know

Body Mass Index – BMI – is a measure that uses a person's height and weight to determine whether they are underweight, a healthy weight, overweight or obese.

It's a really simple way to categorise weight as it doesn't require expensive equipment, it's non-invasive and you don't need to go to the doctors to work it out.

It is commonly used by health professionals to determine whether a person is at an increased risk of developing serious health conditions such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease.

For most people BMI is a useful indication of whether they're a healthy weight, overweight or obese

However BMI is only a guide

BMI takes into account natural variations in body shape, giving a healthy weight range for a particular height. Muscle is denser than fat so very muscular people e.g. athletes, weight trainers may be classed as overweight even though their body fat is low

BMI doesn't take into account age and older adults tend to have higher levels of body fat than younger adults at the same BMI. Older people could fall into 'healthy weight' but could carry excess fat.

<i>If your BMI is:</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
<i>Under 18.5</i>	<i>Underweight</i>
<i>Between 18.5 – 24.9</i>	<i>Healthy weight</i>
<i>Between 25 – 29.9</i>	<i>Overweight</i>
<i>Above 30</i>	<i>Obese</i>

For adults 18+ only

Or gender as women tend to have higher levels of fat in the body than men at the same BMI

BMI doesn't tell you where the fat is and there is a link between carrying too much fat around the waist and being at risk of developing certain health conditions. It's possible to have a healthy BMI and have excess fat

Regardless of your height or BMI, you should try to lose weight if your waist is:

- 94cm (37ins) or more for men
- 80cm (31.5ins) or more for women