

Obesity: Effects on the Heart

What is obesity?

Obesity is a condition in which you have too much body fat. The body mass index (BMI) uses your height and weight to estimate how much fat is on your body. You can use the BMI to see if you are overweight or obese.

- A healthy weight is a BMI of 18.5 to 24.9.
- Overweight is a BMI of 25 to 29.9.
- Obesity is a BMI of 30 or higher.

What are the effects of obesity on the heart?

Obesity changes in the structure and function of the heart. It increases your risk of heart disease.

The more you weigh, the more blood you have flowing through your body. The heart has to work harder to pump the extra blood. It stretches and gets bigger. The heart muscle gets thicker. The thicker the heart muscle gets, the harder it is for it to squeeze and relax with each heartbeat. Over time, the heart may not be able to keep up with the extra load. You may then have heart failure.

Obese people often have high blood pressure. High blood pressure also makes the heart work harder.

How can I lower my risk of heart disease and heart attacks?

You can lower your risk of heart disease and other illnesses by having a healthy weight and healthy blood pressure.

If you are overweight or obese and have heart disease, losing weight will lower your blood pressure and help your heart work better. A plan for losing weight should include:

- Eating healthy foods
- Eating fewer calories
- Being more physically active.

Ask your healthcare provider to help you lose weight in a way that is safe and healthy. Ask about the best ways to get more exercise. You may also need to take blood pressure medicine or heart medicine.

Developed by RelayHealth.

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Calculating Your Health Risk Using Your Body Mass Index

1. Find your body mass index (BMI) on the chart below. Your body mass index uses your height and weight to estimate how much fat is on your body. Find your height on the left. Then find your weight on the row at the top. Your BMI is the number on the chart at the intersection between your height and weight.

Weight	105	110	115	120	125	130	135	140	145	150	155	160	165	170	175	180	185	190	195	200	205	210	215	
Height																								
5'0"	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	
5'1"	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
5'2"	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	
5'3"	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	
5'4"	18	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	
5'5"	17	18	19	20	20	21	22	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	29	30	30	31	32	33	34	35	35	
5'6"	17	17	18	19	20	21	21	22	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	29	29	30	31	32	33	34	34	
5'7"	16	17	18	18	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	29	29	30	31	32	33	33	
5'8"	16	16	17	18	19	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	28	29	30	31	32	32	
5'9"	15	16	17	17	18	19	20	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	28	29	30	31	31	
5'10"	15	15	16	17	18	18	19	20	20	21	22	23	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	28	29	30	30	
5'11"	14	15	16	16	17	18	18	19	20	21	21	22	23	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	28	29	30	
6'0"	14	14	15	16	17	17	18	19	19	20	21	21	22	23	23	24	25	25	26	27	27	28	29	
6'1"	13	14	15	15	16	17	17	18	19	19	20	21	21	22	23	23	24	25	25	26	27	27	28	
6'2"	13	14	14	15	16	16	17	18	18	19	19	20	21	21	22	23	23	24	25	25	26	27	27	
6'3"	13	13	14	15	15	16	16	17	18	18	19	20	20	21	21	22	23	23	24	25	25	26	26	
6'4"	12	13	14	14	15	15	16	17	17	18	18	19	20	20	21	22	22	23	23	24	25	25	26	

2. Measure your waist size.
3. Use your BMI and waist size to determine your health risk on the chart below.

BMI		Waist size	
		35 inches or less (women) 40 inches or less (men)	More than 35 inches (women) More than 40 inches (men)
<18	Underweight		
18.5 to 24.9	Healthy Weight		
25 to 29.9	Overweight	Increased risk	High risk
30 to 34.9	Obese	High risk	Very high risk
35 to 39.9	Obese	Very high risk	Very high risk
40 or more	Extremely Obese	Extremely high risk	Extremely high risk

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