Care Gram
Adult Body Mass Index (BMI)

What Is BMI?

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a calculated score based on a person's weight and height. The calculation is an easy, non-invasive way to screen for health risks in adults 20 years or older. BMI does not show how much body fat a person has on their body; instead, it measures the amount of excess weight. However, several studies show that most BMI levels are close to the person's actual body fat and provide a useful measure for obesity and its health risks.

BMI for children and teens is calculated the same as adults; however, it is translated differently. Because body fat changes with age and varies by gender, BMI for children and teens is shown as a percentile ranking based on age and gender.

What Does My BMI Score Mean?

BMI score places a person into one of five main groups – underweight, normal, overweight, obesity, or severe obesity.

Body Mass Index Categories	
BMI	**Weight Categories**
Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5 - 24.9	Normal
25.0 - 29.9	Overweight
30.0 - 39.9	Obesity
Above 40	Severe Obesity

A person's risk of disease increases if they have a higher BMI score. People who score in the overweight or obese category are more likely to have health problems due to their weight.

People who have a low BMI and score in the underweight category may have health risks such as:
- Malnutrition – occurs when the body does not get enough nutrients
- Osteoporosis – a condition in which the bones become weak and brittle
- Weak immune system – likely to get sick more often, and have difficulty recovering from illnesses
- Fertility problems – due to irregular menstrual cycles
- Increased risk for complications from surgery

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Although BMI is a reasonable indicator of body fat for both adults and children, other factors such as age, sex, ethnicity, and muscle mass should be considered when determining a person's ideal BMI. Older adults and women tend to have more body fat. Because muscle mass weighs more than fat, muscular individuals and highly trained athletes may have higher BMIs but lower health risk. Asians have a higher health risk at a lower BMI. They are considered overweight at a BMI of 23 and obese at 27 or above.

Other assessments could be done to determine a person's overall health risk including skin fold thickness measurement, review of diet and physical activity, and family history. Waist circumference can identify abdominal obesity and fat around the vital organs, while waist to hip ratio can predict metabolic risk and heart disease. Talk to your doctor about how best to determine your ideal BMI.

How Do I Calculate My BMI?
The table below can help you determine your BMI. Find your height on the left-hand column. Then, find your weight in the same row. The number at the top of the table, above your weight, is your BMI. If your height or weight is not on this table, use the website below to determine your BMI.

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/BMI/bmicalc.htm

BMI (kg/m²)	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	35	40
Height (in.)	Weight (lb.)													
58	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	167	191
59	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	173	198
60	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	179	204
61	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	185	211
62	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	191	218
63	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	197	225
64	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	204	232
65	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	210	240
66	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	216	247
67	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	223	255
68	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	230	262
69	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	236	270
70	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	207	243	278
71	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	250	286
72	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	258	294