

Body Mass Index (BMI)

What is BMI?

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a person’s weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters. It does not measure body fat directly but appears to be a strong indicator of risk for various diseases. In general, it’s an inexpensive and easy method of screening for weight category.

BMI	Weight Status
Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5 – 24.9	Normal or Healthy Weight
25.0 – 29.9	Overweight
30.0 and above	Obese

How is BMI calculated?

BMI can be calculated by hand, or using either of these calculators:

[Adult BMI Calculator](#) or [Child and Teen BMI Calculator](#)

To calculate BMI by hand, use one of the following formulas:

Calculation with kilograms and meters (or centimeters):

- Formula: $\text{weight (kg)} / [\text{height (m)}]^2$
- Example: Weight = 68 kg, Height = 165 cm (1.65 m)
Calculation: $68 \div (1.65)^2 = 24.98$

Calculation with pounds and inches:

- Formula: $[\text{weight (lbs.)} / [\text{height (in)}]^2] \times 703$
- Example: Weight = 150 lbs., Height = 5’5” (65”)
Calculation: $[150 \div (65)^2] \times 703 = 24.96$

How is BMI used?

A high BMI can be an indicator of high body fatness. BMI can be used as a screening tool, but it is not diagnostic of the body fatness or health of an individual.

To determine if a high BMI is a health risk, a health care provider would need to perform more assessments. These might include skinfold measurements, diet evaluations, physical activity, family history and other appropriate health screenings.

Sources: [CDC Assessing Your Weight](#), [CDC Finding a Balance with Diet and Activity](#)