

BODY MASS INDEX

Q. WHAT IS BODY MASS INDEX?

A. Body Mass Index (BMI) is a measure of your weight in relation to your height.

Q. HOW DO I CALCULATE MY BMI?

A. The mathematical formula is:

$$\text{BMI} = \text{weight(kg)}/\text{height(m)}^2$$

or

$$\text{BMI} = (\text{weight(pounds)}/\text{height(inches)}^2) \times 703$$

You can find free BMI calculators on the internet such as www.kidshealth.com or <http://pediatrics.about.com>. Also, feel free to call me and schedule your own confidential, complimentary BMI screening here at the Boutwell Nurse's Office.

Q. WHAT DOES MY NUMBER REALLY MEAN?

A. For adults a BMI between:

- 18.5 – 24.9 = Healthy Weight
- 25.0 – 29.9 = Overweight
- 30.0 or greater = Obesity

Q. HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD IS OVERWEIGHT?

A. In children and adolescents age 6-19, "overweight" has been defined as a gender and age-specific BMI at or above the 95th percentile – base on revised CDC growth charts (www.cdc.gov/growthcharts).

Q. ARE THERE ANY LIMITATION TO BMI?

A. Yes, BMI can overestimate body fat in people who are very muscular and it can underestimate body fat in people who have lost muscle mass, such as many elderly people. An actual diagnosis of overweight or obesity should be made by your primary health care provider.

A STUDY IN 1999 FOUND:

- 61% OF ADULTS IN THE U.S. WERE OVERWEIGHT
- 13 % OF CHILDREN AGE 6-11 WERE OVERWEIGHT
- 14 % OF ADOLESCENTS AGE 12-19 WERE OVERWEIGHT – THIS PREVALENCE HAS NEARLY TRIPLED IN THE LAST 20 YEARS!

(Source: www.surgeongeneral.gov)

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