

BMI – THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

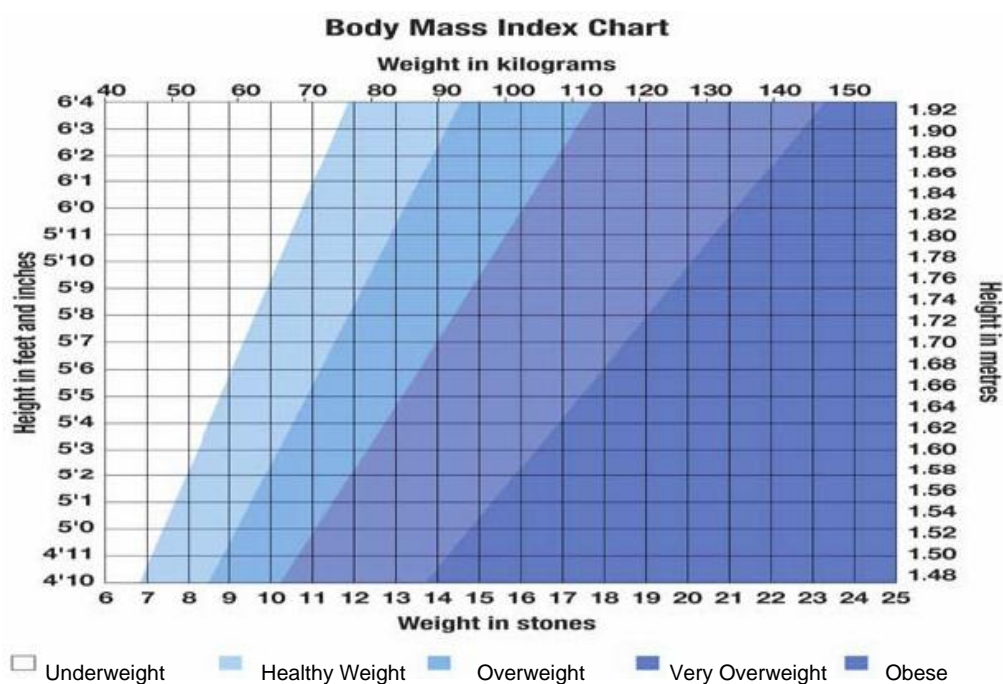
The Body Mass Index (BMI) is one of the most common ways of classifying whether people's weight is appropriate for their height. Used by the World Health Organisation, it is a useful indicator of the health risks associated with being underweight, overweight or obese.

BMI is defined as the weight in kilograms divided by the square of the height in metres (kg/m^2).

For example, an adult who weighs 70kg and whose height is 1.75m will have a BMI of 22.9.

$$\text{BMI} = 70 \text{ (kg)} / 1.75^2 \text{ (m}^2\text{)} = 22.9$$

The higher the score usually indicates higher levels of body fat. The higher the figure the more overweight you are.



BMI is often used to determine the level of health risk associated with obesity and is a simple calculation from standard measurements.

Although BMI is a widely used standard method to verify whether a person's weight is healthy or not, it is not an absolute accurate calculation, as body compositions can vary between individuals.

There are a number of factors that might influence whether or not your BMI is a true reflection of your total body fat.

For instance, muscle is denser than fat and takes up less space. Therefore an athlete or heavily muscled person might weigh more than a same sized over-weight person, or two individuals with identical BMI might have widely different body fat percentages. In this case, calculating your body-fat percentage might require the advice of a GP.

BMI may not be accurate for pregnant or lactating women.

Inaccuracies may also occur in older people, as bones may begin to weigh less.

Like any of these types of measures it is only an indication and other issues such as body type and shape have a bearing as well. **Remember, BMI is just a guide!**