

Clearing Up Some Confusion

We doctors of internal medicine are also known as “internists” or “general internists.” This should not be confused with “interns,” who are doctors in their first year of training after medical school. Nor are we the same as “general practitioners” (GPs), or “family physicians” (FPs), whose practices may include surgery, obstetrics and pediatrics, and whose training is not solely concentrated on adults.

INTERNAL MEDICINE
DOCTORS FOR ADULTS™

100
Million
Adult Americans
Are Overweight
and at Risk of
Serious Disease.

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American College of Physicians—
American Society of Internal Medicine,
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A Message from Doctors of Internal Medicine (Internists)



Nearly 100 million adults in America have a problem that puts them at increased risk of chronic disease: They are overweight or obese. Are you—or someone close to you—among them?

Excessive weight has become an epidemic among adults in America, and this concerns us, because, as internists, we make a practice of treating adults. We devote at least three additional years – after medical school – learning to prevent, diagnose and treat diseases that primarily affect adults.

Many internists take additional training to “subspecialize” in such areas as cardiology, endocrinology, oncology, rheumatology, gastroenterology, pulmonology, geriatrics, and adolescent medicine.

This pamphlet shows how to calculate your Body Mass Index (BMI), which is simply a ratio of your height to your weight. It shows how an increase in BMI relates to increased risk of several serious diseases. If your BMI is above normal, be sure to talk with us, so we can determine if you are running an increased risk. If you are, we can screen for, and treat, complications and develop a program of weight reduction and maintenance.

Prevalence of Overweight & Obesity among U.S. Adults 1988-1994

	Age 30-39 = 58.1%		Age 30-39 = 47.0%
	Age 40-49 = 65.5%		Age 40-49 = 52.7%
	Age 50-59 = 73.0%		Age 50-59 = 64.4%

Source: National Institutes of Health/National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute

What is Your “Body Mass Index” (BMI)

To calculate BMI, divide weight in pounds by height in inches squared. Multiply by 704.5. For example, a person who weighs 164 pounds and is 68 inches (or 5'8”) tall has a BMI of 25:

$$\text{BMI} = \text{weight (lb.)} \div \text{height (in.) squared} \times 704.5$$

Classification of Overweight & Obesity by BMI

Underweight	=	BMI of less than 18.5
Normal	=	BMI of 18.5-24.9
Overweight	=	BMI of 25-29.9
Obese	=	BMI of 30-plus

Calculated BMI by Height & Weight

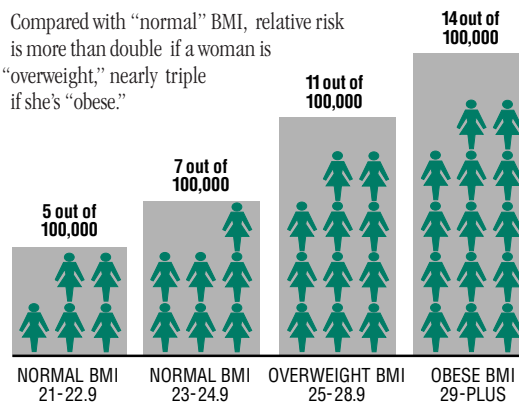
Height	BMI of 23 (Normal)	BMI of 25 (Overweight)	BMI of 30 (Obese)
5'4”	134 pounds	145 pounds	174 pounds
5'6”	142 pounds	155 pounds	186 pounds
5'8”	151 pounds	164 pounds	197 pounds
5'10”	160 pounds	174 pounds	209 pounds
6'	169 pounds	184 pounds	221 pounds

BMI & Risk of Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) in Men

- In British men, CHD incidence increases at BMI's above 22.
- An increase of one BMI unit is associated with a 10% increase in the rate of coronary events.
- Similar relationships have been shown in U.S. populations.

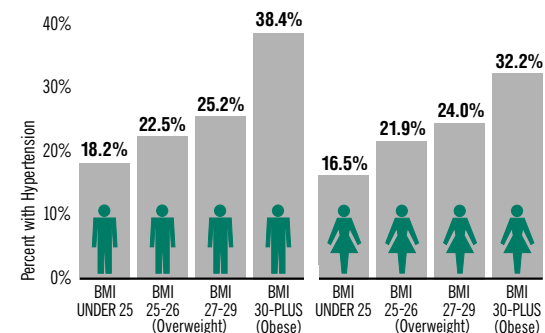
BMI & Risk of Heart Attacks in Women

Compared with “normal” BMI, relative risk is more than double if a woman is “overweight,” nearly triple if she’s “obese.”



Number of women age 30-55, in a town of 100,000 women, who will have a heart attack, sometimes fatal, in the next 14 years.

BMI & Risk of Hypertension (High Blood Pressure)



Other Overweight/Obesity-Related Health Complications

Cancer

- Twice as many women with a body mass index (BMI) greater than 29 had colon cancer as women with a BMI less than 21.
- A gain of more than 20 pounds, from age 18 to 40, doubles a woman's risk of postmenopausal breast cancer.
- The risk of endometrial cancer is three times higher among women with a BMI of 30 or higher, compared to normal weight women.

Diabetes

- 27 percent of new cases of diabetes are attributable to weight gain of 11 pounds or more in adulthood.
- The relative risk* of diabetes increases by about 25 percent for each additional unit of BMI over 22.
- Diabetes is associated with long-term complications that affect almost every major part of the body. It can cause blindness, heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, nerve damage and sometimes requires amputation(s).

Osteoarthritis

- In a study of middle-aged women, every 2.2 pound increase in weight was associated with a 9-13 percent increase in the risk of developing osteoarthritis in the knees.
- A drop in BMI of 2 units or more during a 10-year period decreased the odds for developing knee osteoarthritis by more than 50 percent.

Other Health Complications

- Stroke
- Dyslipidemia (high blood cholesterol)
- Prostate cancer
- Sleep apnea
- Other respiratory problems

*Relative risk = risk relative to risk at normal weight.