

## Body Mass Index (BMI) Frequently Asked Questions

What is Body Mass Index (BMI)

- Body Mass Index is a number calculated from a person's weight and height.
- BMI is a reliable indicator of body fatness for most people.
- BMI does not measure body fat, directly, but research has shown that BMI correlates to direct measures of body fat, such as underwater weighing and dual energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA)

How is BMI used?

- BMI is used as a screening tool to identify possible weight problems, but it is not a diagnostic tool.
- To determine if excess weight is a health risk, a healthcare provider would need to perform further assessments.

How is BMI Calculated?

- Formula
  - Weight (kg)/[height (m) x height (m)] OR Weight (lb)/[height (in) x height (in)]
- BMI numbers for Adults are based on the above formula.
- BMI numbers for children and youth are based on the above formula and then converted to percentile specific to Sex and age using pediatric charts/tables available at: <http://nccd.cdc.gov/dnpabmi/calculator.aspx>

Weight Status Categories

- For Adults: see chart on right.
- For children, refer to the BMI charts in the Chapter 3 of the CD Manual

BMI	Weight Status
Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5 – 24.9	Normal
25.0 – 29.9	Overweight
30.0 and Above	Obese

What are the consequences of being overweight or obese?

- Individuals who are overweight or obese are at increases risk for many diseases and health conditions including: hypertension, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, osteoarthritis, respiratory problems and some cancers.

If I am overweight or obese, how can I take care of myself or help myself get to a normal weight

- Eat a better diet (make half your plate fruit and vegetables)
- Be vigilant of portion sizes when eating meals.
- Exercise regularly (60-90 minutes, 5 times a week at moderate intensity)
- Reduce soda and sugary drink consumption -- drink more water.

When should I worry about being underweight?

- You should consult your doctor to determine if you should gain weight, as low BMI can decrease your body's immune system, which could lead to illness such as bone loss, malnutrition, disappearance of periods (for women), and other conditions.

What are the treatments?

- In most cases, maintaining an active lifestyle, exercising regularly,, and eating a better diet will be the treatment to achieving a healthy weight status.
- However, Special Olympics suggests meeting with a doctor to discuss a plan and ensure no other health issues.

We do not currently have a doctor -- what should I do?

- Talk with your SO Program as they may have resources to help connect you with a doctor or medical services for follow-up.