

Did You Know?

- A weight loss of five to 10 percent in excess body weight can significantly reduce risk factors and provide health benefits
- Overweight and obesity are associated with heart disease, certain types of cancer, type 2 diabetes, stroke, arthritis, breathing problems, and psychological disorders such as depression
- **Obesity-related costs in the US total approximately \$100 billion annually**



- **Americans spend an estimated \$33 billion each year on weight loss products and services**
- Each year, an estimated 300,000 US adults die of causes attributable to obesity
- Type 2 diabetes is nearly 3-4 times more prevalent in overweight adults than in lean adults
- Men who are more than 20 percent overweight have a 20-30 percent increase in death from prostate cancer
- The percentage of children and adolescents who are defined as overweight has more than doubled since the early 1970s

Source: Surgeon General, CDC, and Dr. Donnicca.com

Why Are We Gaining So Much Weight?

Certainly, there are several contributing factors for why Americans are gaining so much weight—a problem so widespread is bound to be pretty complicated. But after all is said and done, experts agree on at least three key factors driving overweight and obesity in the US today. They are outlined below.

Factor #1 The Working Life

The world of work is changing. Cell phones, pagers, faxes, and e-mails now dominate our working lives. And while Americans aren't working any less, they are moving less. 100 years ago, most people made their living through hard physical work—farming the land, building railroads, and burning calories. Today, more than half of us sit in front of a computer all day, burning very few calories at all. Even those of us not using computers during the day are burning fewer calories because of technological advancements that make our work easier.

Factor #2: Food, Food, Food

Food is abundantly available—in fact, it's everywhere. And America is eating it up.

Americans now spend more money on fast food than on higher education, personal computers, computer software, or new cars. They spend more on fast food than on movies, books, magazines, newspapers, videos, and recorded music—combined. Consider this. In 1970, Americans spent about \$6 billion on fast food; in 2000, they spent more than \$110 billion.

Factor #3: Our Sedentary Society

In total, there are 168 hours in every week. The vast majority—nearly 70%—are devoted to sedentary activities. Consider that employed adults work an average of 47 hours per week. In addition, the typical American spends 16 hours and 55 minutes sitting in front of the TV, and averages 50.6 hours of sleep. These three everyday activities alone account for over 113 sedentary hours per week—almost five days of not moving!

Sources: *Fast Food Nation*, *The Overworked American*, and *The National Sleep Foundation*



Weighty Matters

Thinking About Weight

According to several health experts, overweight and obesity has become the number one health problem in the United States today. The majority of Americans are either overweight or obese (extremely heavy), and the end appears to be nowhere in sight. Making the issue even more critical, obesity claims approximately 300,000 lives each year, second only to cigarette smoking.

Part of addressing this escalating health issue is taking personal responsibility for your own weight. The first step is to honestly and accurately assess your weight to determine just how many pounds you may need to lose. This brochure will outline the three main ways to assess your weight as well as explore some simple strategies to help you maintain a healthy weight.



For More Information

US Food and Drug Administration
www.fda.gov

US Department of Agriculture
www.usda.gov

American Dietetic Association
www.eatright.org

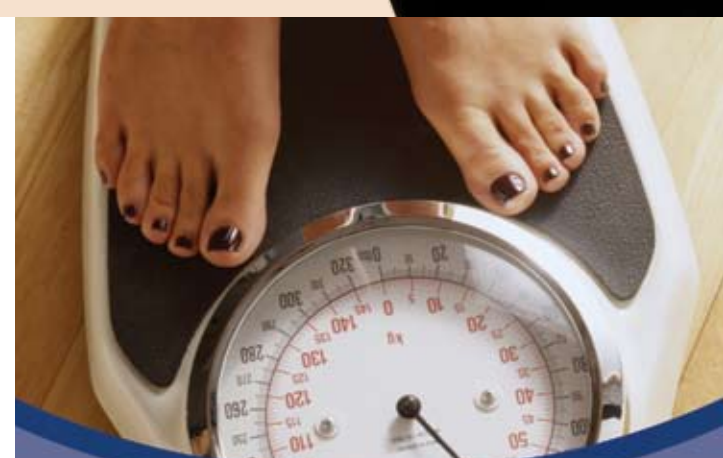
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Perfect POUNDS

Assessing Your Weight

Portion sizes are out of control, and it shows in our waistlines. How do your meals measure up? Here is your guide to eating right and living well.

Assessing Your True Weight Status

One of the most important steps people can take to protect their health is becoming aware of their true weight status. Our weight, be it healthy or not, can be an important risk factor for a number of diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. In fact, more than 300,000 Americans die each year from diseases caused or worsened by overweight and obesity. So, it's important to know your true weight status.

You're probably wondering, "How can I determine my true weight status? Unfortunately, because we tend to underestimate our weight, and overestimate our health, we need some help. The best way to measure our weight status is, "by the numbers." This means using tools like Body Mass Index (BMI), Waist Circumference, or Waist-to-Hip Ratio. Don't worry, they're not as scary as they sound, and understanding them could be one of the most important things to know about your health. The rest of this brochure will help you understand a little bit more about each of these tools for determining your weight status.

Body Mass Index

Body Mass Index (BMI), is one of the best measures of our true weight status. Put simply, BMI is a common measure expressing the relationship of weight-to-height, and is an easy calculation using inches and pounds. When calculated, your BMI will help you determine your true weight status as either underweight, normal, overweight, or obese.

These BMI ranges are based on the effect of weight status on disease and death. Generally, as a person's BMI increases, so does their risk for a number of health conditions and diseases. These include the risk of premature death, heart disease, high blood pressure, osteoarthritis, cancer, and diabetes.

Calculating BMI

You can calculate your BMI by using a simple mathematical formula. BMI is a method for estimating a person's ideal or healthy weight. BMI is calculated as weight in kilograms divided by height in meters squared.

Chart 1, the BMI Chart, makes determining your BMI even easier. Simply find your height and weight and circle the number where the two lines intersect. This is your BMI.

Now that we know how to determine BMI, we can use this number to determine weight status (using Chart 2—underweight, normal, overweight, or obese). Remember, BMI values for adults are interpreted using a fixed number, regardless of age or sex, using the following guidelines:

Chart 2

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

Using Chart 2, we can tell that a BMI greater than 25 is clinically defined as being overweight. A BMI of 30 and above is the clinical marker for obesity.

Waist Circumference

Waist circumference is a common measure used to assess abdominal fat content. The presence of excess body fat in the abdomen, when out of proportion to total body fat, is a sign that you may be at risk for ailments associated with obesity.

The risk for diseases such as heart disease or arthritis increases with a waist measurement of over 40 inches in men, and over 35 inches in women.

Who	Waist Circumference	Risk
Men	Greater than 40"	Increased Risk
Women	Greater than 35"	Increased Risk

To measure waist circumference, use a tape measure to comfortably measure the distance around the smallest area below the rib cage and above your belly button.

Waist-to-Hip Ratio

Waist-to-Hip ratio (WHR) is the ratio of a person's waist size to hip size, mathematically calculated as the waist size divided by the hip size. To calculate your waist-to-hip ratio, measure waist size at the

navel in men, and midway between the bottom of the ribs and the top of the hipbone in women. Then measure hips at the tip of the hip bone in men and at the widest point between the hips and buttocks in women. Then divide your waist size by your hip size to get your waist-to-hip ratio. For example, if you are a male and your waist is 40" and your hips are 44", your waist to hip ratio is .90 and barely falls within a healthy range.

Risky Ratios

For both men a waist-to-hip ratio of greater than .90 is considered risky. For women, a waist-to-hip ratio of .80 or higher is considered "at risk" or in the danger zone for undesirable health consequences.

Safe Ratios
For men, a ratio of .90 or less is considered safe.
For women, a ratio of .80 or less is considered safe.

Shedding Pounds The Right Way

Listed here you'll find three key things to keep in mind when attempting to lose weight. Don't forget to check with your healthcare provider before making important changes, and remember to take it slow. Getting hurt is no fun, and it will set you back in reaching your goals.

1. Adjust Your Diet.

A few simple changes can make a big difference when it comes to what you eat. Because one pound of fat is equal to 3,500 calories, cutting just a few hundred calories out of your diet each day can go a long way. Easy ways to cut calories include eating less dressing and sauce and substituting an apple or banana for your afternoon candy bar.

2. Increase Physical Activity.

We're not talking about running a marathon here—in fact that's the last thing you want to do if you're just getting started. Begin to increase physical activity by making small changes like parking your car farther away from the entrance of a store or taking the stairs instead of the elevator. Later, you may want to start taking short walks in the evening hours after work.

3. Avoid Fad Diets.

Stay away from fad diets at all costs. Why? Plain and simple, they just don't work. The only way to lose weight and keep it off is to adjust what you eat and get more activity into your daily routine.

Here's how you can spot a fad diet.

Fad diets will often...

- Promote miracle foods or formulas
- Require little or no physical activity
- Focus on rapid weight loss (more than two pounds a week)
- Recommend rigid menus and plans
- Require specific food combinations
- Guarantee results

Chart 1

BMI	Normal					Overweight					Obese					Extreme Obesity																				
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54
Height (inches)	Body Weight (pounds)																																			
58	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	148	153	158	162	167	172	177	181	186	191	196	201	205	210	215	220	224	229	234	239	244	248	253	258
59	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	173	178	183	188	193	198	203	208	212	217	222	227	232	237	242	247	252	257	262	267
60	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	174	179	184	189	194	199	204	209	215	220	225	230	235	240	245	250	255	261	266	271	276
61	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	164	169	174	180	185	190	195	201	206	211	217	222	227	232	238	243	248	254	259	264	269	275	280	285
62	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	169	175	180	186	191	196	202	207	213	218	224	229	235	240	246	251	256	262	267	273	278	284	289	295
63	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	175	180	186	191	197	203	208	214	220	225	231	237	242	248	254	259	265	270	278	282	287	293	299	304
64	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	180	186	192	197	204	209	215	221	227	232	238	244	250	256	262	267	273	279	285	291	296	302	308	314
65	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	186	192	198	204	210	216	222	228	234	240	246	252	258	264	270	276	282	288	294	300	306	312	318	324
66	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	192	198	204	210	216	223	229	235	241	247	253	260	266	272	278	284	291	297	303	309	315	322	328	334
67	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	198	204	211	217	223	230	236	242	249	255	261	268	274	280	287	293	299	306	312	319	325	331	338	344
68	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	203	210	216	223	230	236	243	249	256	262	269	276	282	289	295	302	308	315	322	328	335	341	348	354
69	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	209	216	223	230	236	243	250	257	263	270	277	284	291	297	304	311	318	324	331	338	345	351	358	365
70	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216	222	229	236	243	250	257	264	271	278	285	292	299	306	313	320	327	334	341	348	355	362	369	376
71	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222	229	236	243	250	257	265	272	279	286	293	301	308	315	322	329	338	343	351	358	365	372	379	386
72	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	228	235	242	250	258	265	272	279	287	294	302	309	316	324	331	338	346	353	361	368	375	383	390	397
73	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	235	242	250	257	265	272	280	288	295	302	310	318	325	333	340	348	355	363	371	378	386	393	401	408
74	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	241	249	256	264	272	280	287	295	303	311	319	326	334	342	350	358	365	373	381	389	396	404	412	420
75	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	248	256	264	272	279	287	295	303	311	319	327	335	343	351	359	367	375	383	391	399	407	415	423	431
76	156	164	172	180	189	197	205	213	221	230	238	246	254	263	271	279	287	295	304	312	320	328	336	344	353	361	369	377	385	394	402	410	418	426	435	443

Source: Adapted from Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults: The Evidence Report.

