

IS A 'HEALTHY WEIGHT' ALL THAT?

This week's focus: Understanding what BMI information really means and that even the smallest amount of weight loss and improvement to your lifestyle can have huge impacts on your health

Why is it important?: We do need to understand what BMI means for us, but also be aware that it is just a generalisation and getting fixated on being in a specific category isn't always the be all and end all. The progress you are making on your journey will always bring you benefits and quite often more than you realise.

What will we tell you?: How BMI has been developed, what the BMI categories mean and the benefits of even small amounts of weight loss and lifestyle changes.

- 1 Your BMI is calculated by taking your weight in kg and dividing it by your height in m squared. This gives a figure that then fits into one of the range of BMI figures, which are categorised in to 5 categories:
underweight (<18.5) **healthy range** (18.5-24.9) **overweight** (25-29.9) **obese** (>30)

Then using **generalised mass population data** doctors and scientists can determine what your health risks are based upon your BMI.
- 2 Important to understand that this doesn't mean that it is a given that you will be at risk of disease. BMI is based purely on your weight or mass, and not on your body composition – so a rock solid mountain of muscle could be deemed obese when in fact, they are very fit and healthy. So, other factors, such as family history, how physically active you are, fat to lean muscle ratio, where you store fat and your current health status all impact on these health risks too.
- 3 We encourage you to take this into account and use a more friendly categorisation for BMI.

<18.5 – Could be light, self assess and seek trusted opinion 18.5-24.9 – Seems ok - keep on track
25-29.9 – Could be ok, self assess > 30 – Worth a check, seek a trusted and professional opinion
- 4 According to *generalised population data*, someone in a healthy weight range is at less risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke, high blood pressure and some cancers. However, it is also important to appreciate that someone who is in the overweight category but is physically active, has a higher life expectancy and at less risk of disease than someone who is in the healthy weight range but does no physical activity.
- 5 **5% of bodyweight lost** (approx. 7 – 14lbs) stone depending on your weight) can improve our sleep quality, improve our blood pressure, reduces triglycerides in the blood – a risk for heart disease, increase our fertility and improve our insulin sensitivity (i.e the body can process sugars better) reducing diabetes risk
- 6 **7.5% of bodyweight lost** (approx. 11 – 21 lbs) improves conditions such as sleep apnoea, and symptoms of depression and low mood (on top of the ones we get at 5%)
- 7 **10% bodyweight lost** (approx. 15 - 28 lbs) significantly reduces cancer risk, it reduces inflammation in the body which in turn reduces your general disease and illness risk and most specifically for heart attacks and strokes.

KEY MESSAGES

Even the smallest amounts of success will bring you huge health benefits, so don't get hung up on a particular BMI category.

Check your awards section – where are you at? How many percentage points of bodyweight have you lost so far – think of what benefits that has brought you already.

Be Strong isn't just about weight loss, it is about improving our whole lifestyle to the point that we can enjoy ourselves, be comfortable with not just our appearance but what we can do too, whilst living a long and healthy life.

BE STRONG
Eat. Move. Live

THE KNOWLEDGE