

# ISHIB Health Facts

# OBESITY

## DEFINING OBESITY AND OVERWEIGHT

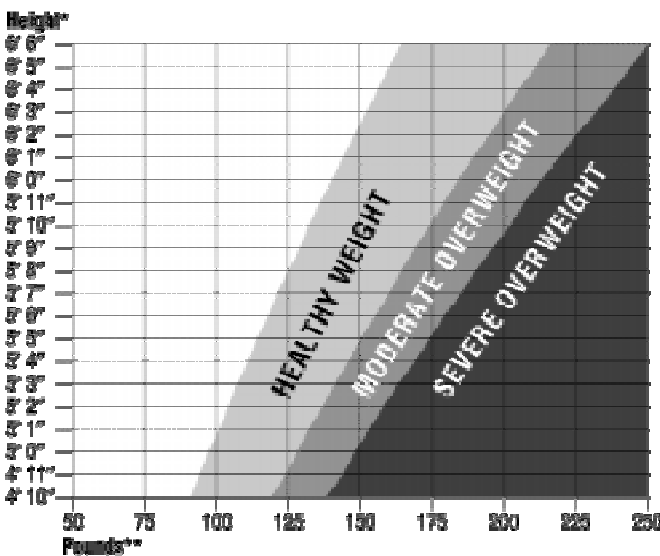
Following standards set by the National Institutes of Health, overweight occurs when an individual's body weight is greater than the standard weight for a person of the same height. The excess weight may be from muscle, bone, fat, and/or body water.

Obesity, on the other hand, occurs when an individual has an abnormally high proportion of body fat. It is possible to be overweight and not obese (for example, the athlete who acquires a lot of muscle); however many overweight people are also obese.

## DETERMINING OBESITY AND OVERWEIGHT

Health care professionals use two methods to determine an individual weight status. First, a chart developed by the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee can be used to place an individual in one of four categories: underweight, healthy weight, moderate overweight and severe overweight.

Use the chart below to determine your weight status.



The second common way to determine overweight and obesity in adults is to use the Body Mass Index (BMI). This method is the primary choice of researchers and healthcare providers. Using your weight in pounds, you can calculate your BMI by using the formula:

$$\text{Step 1: } \frac{\text{Weight (lbs.)} \times 704.5}{\text{Height (in inches)}^2} = X$$

$$\text{Step 2: } \frac{X}{\text{Height (in inches)}} = \text{BMI}$$

To determine your BMI using metric values, use this formula:

$$\frac{\text{Weight (kg)}}{\text{Height}^2(\text{meters})} = \text{BMI}$$

To determine how your BMI compares to national guidelines, see page 2.

\*Without shoes.

\*\* Without clothes. The higher weights apply to people with more muscle and bone, such as many men.

Source: Report of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 1995, pages 23-24.



### BMI GUIDELINES

According to the National Institutes of Health, the following guide indicates BMI categories for adults.

Underweight =	BMI less than 18.5
Normal weight =	BMI 18.5 to 24.9
Overweight =	BMI 25 to 29.9
Obesity (Class I) =	BMI 30 to 34.9
Obesity (Class II) =	BMI 35 to 39.9
Extreme Obesity (Class III) =	BMI $\geq$ 40

### PREVALENCE OF OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY IN MINORITIES

Overweight and obesity are more common among minorities, especially women, than in the White population. Consider these statistics:<sup>1</sup>

- 65.8% Black women (20+ years old) are overweight or obese
- 65.9% Mexican-American women (20+ years old) are overweight or obese
- 49.2% White women (20+ years old) are overweight or obese
- 56.5% Black men (20+ years old) are overweight or obese
- 63.9% Mexican-American men (20+ years old) are overweight or obese
- 61.0% White men (20+ years old) are overweight or obese

<sup>1</sup> Flegal KM, Carrol MD, Kuczmarski RJ, Johnson CL. Overweight and obesity in the United States: prevalence and trends, 1960-1994. *Int J Obes.* 1998;22:39-47.

### WHY WORRY ABOUT BEING OVERWEIGHT OR OBESITY?

Extra weight can be harmful to your health. If you are overweight or obese, you are more likely to develop diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and certain forms of cancer. You are also placing yourself at greater risk for these health problems:

- gallbladder disease and gallstones
- osteoarthritis (wearing away of the tissue that protects the joints)
- sleep apnea (a condition that causes you to stop breathing for short periods during sleep)
- gout (another health problem causing joint pain)

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- stroke
- hypertension
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