

Weight and Your Health

Canadians weigh more now than ever before. Excess weight and extra body fat can lead to problems such as high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and type 2 diabetes. All of these conditions can raise your risk for heart disease and stroke. Maintaining a healthy weight plays an important role in cutting your risk of developing these diseases. Together, healthy eating and Active Living are the best ways to reach and maintain a healthy weight.

Can You Spot a Fad Diet?

Fad diets tend to eliminate or severely limit certain food groups or nutrients such as carbohydrates or fat. The bottom line is fad diets don't work! Most people can't eat this way forever. There is little research about the long-term health effects of fad diets. Forego the fad diets and, instead, focus on eating well-balanced meals with sensible portion sizes.

Smoking and Your Weight

When you quit smoking, you may gain up to 8 pounds. But don't use this as an excuse to keep smoking. You would have to gain 80 to 100 pounds to counteract the health benefits of quitting smoking!

Heart and Stroke Foundation offices across the country offer many events that promote Active Living. Log on to www.heartandstroke.ca and choose EVENTS from the Main Menu for more information about events in your area!



Find Your Healthy Weight

From a health standpoint, there is no one "ideal weight" for you. Instead, there is a range of weights that can be healthy for you. The Body Mass Index (BMI) tells you whether you have a high or low risk of developing health problems. It is a ratio of your height and weight. The BMI does not apply to you if you are pregnant, breastfeeding, very muscular or under the age of 18.

You can figure out your BMI by using the chart on the next page:

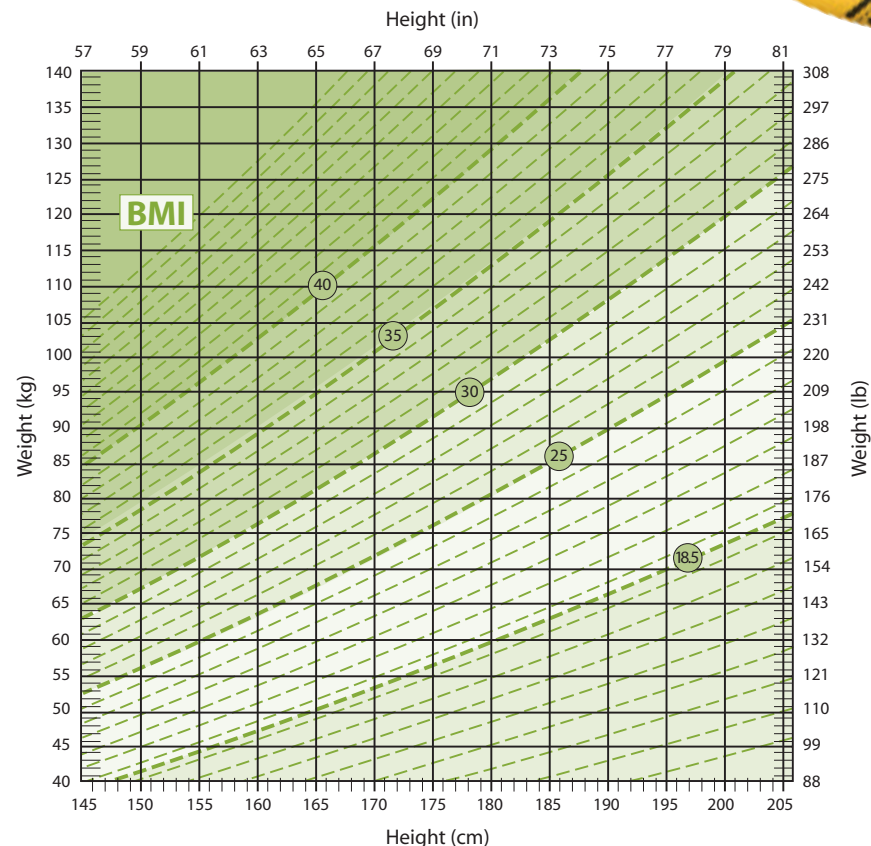
Step 1	Find your current weight and draw a horizontal line across the chart.
Step 2	Find your height and draw a vertical line from the top to the bottom of the chart.
Step 3	Find the point where these two lines cross.
Step 4	The number on the dashed line is your current BMI.

If your BMI is between 18.5 to 24.9, you are at a normal weight. Based on your weight, you have the least risk of developing health problems.

You're considered underweight if your BMI is under 18.5, and overweight if your BMI is over 25.

Find out more about your BMI by logging on to www.heartandstroke.ca/healthyweight.

BMI Chart



• **Source:** Health Canada. Canadian Guidelines for Body Weight Classification in Adults. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada; 2003.

Now Look at Your Shape

A pear-shaped figure with a little extra weight around the hips and thighs isn't as unhealthy as an apple-shaped body where the extra pounds are carried around the waist. You have a higher chance of developing heart disease, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes if your waist is:

- more than 35 inches or 88 cm (women)
- more than 40 inches or 102 cm (men)

These waist circumference measurements do not apply to pregnant or breastfeeding women or people under the age of 18.



Commit to a Healthy Lifestyle!

Healthy eating plus Active Living – it's a winning combination that can help you:

- Lose weight
- Stay at a healthy weight
- Have more energy
- Have an increased sense of well-being
- Feel less stressed
- Improve your mood
- Lower your risk of developing heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and type 2 diabetes



HEART & STROKE FOUNDATION

Finding answers. For life.

A Healthy Lifestyle Means a Healthier You!

Feel good about yourself and the changes you make, no matter how small they are.



Healthy Eating

• Eat sensibly. Fill 3/4 of your plate with high fibre foods like whole grains, vegetables, fruit and legumes. Choose lower-fat milk products and leaner meats for the remaining 1/4 of your plate.

• Avoid fad diets. You may lose weight quickly, but it's mostly water. A slow, steady weight loss of 1 to 2 pounds (1/2 to 1 kg) per week is much healthier.

• Watch the portion size of foods. Measure the amount of food you eat and compare it to the serving sizes in *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*. Get your copy of the Food Guide at www.healthcanada.ca/foodguide.

• Don't skip breakfast. People who eat breakfast regularly tend to have a healthier weight than those who skip breakfast.

• Munch on healthier snacks such as fruit, veggies with a low-fat dip, unbuttered popcorn or whole grain crackers with lower-fat cheese.

• Tune in to your eating habits. Do you reach for food as a way of coping with stress or boredom? If so, try heading out for a brisk walk, taking a hot bath or calling a friend instead.

• Try some lower-fat recipes from the Heart and Stroke Foundation's best seller "The New Lighthearted Cookbook" by Anne Lindsay and visit www.heartandstroke.ca/recipes.



Staying at your current weight and not gaining extra weight are important achievements. If you need to lose some weight, start with some of our healthy eating and Active Living tips. Pick up more tips and tools for starting a fitness plan at www.heartandstroke.ca/healthyweight.



Active Living

• Find an activity that fits into your schedule and stick with it – an early morning fitness class, a power walk at lunch, or an evening game of indoor volleyball.

• Take the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator.

• Schedule a stretch break during meetings. Roll your shoulders and neck when sitting at your desk or computer.

• Roller-blade, bike or walk to the mailbox, library, grocery store or work.

• Join a yoga, T'ai chi or Pilates class.

• Wash the car by hand, and wax it too!

• Mow the lawn with a push mower rather than a power mower.

• Work up a sweat by dancing to your favourite tunes.

• Go skating or snowshoeing in the winter.

• Play a game of one-on-one basketball with the neighbour or your kids.

• Get off the bus a couple of stops early and walk the rest of the way.

• Make a regular fitness commitment with a friend or two. It'll keep you motivated!



What is Active Living?

Active Living is about making physical activity a part of your everyday life whether you're at home, work, school or play.

Try to be active for one hour every day. For starters, add up 10 minutes of activity at a time throughout the day until you reach this goal. As you progress to more intense activities, you can cut down to 30 minutes, 4 days a week. Check with your doctor before starting any exercise program.



How many calories are you burning?
Find out by using our Food and Fitness Calculator at www.heartandstroke.ca/healthyweight.

Try recipes from Anne Lindsay's "The New Lighthearted Cookbook".

Visit our web site at www.heartandstroke.ca or call 1-888-HSF-INFO (473-4636).

Sponsored by



The Heart and Stroke Foundation thanks Becel for providing funds to make the development of this resource possible. This acknowledgement does not constitute an endorsement of the Sponsor's products or services. The content of this brochure has been independently researched, written and reviewed by the Heart and Stroke Foundation and is based on scientific evidence.

Item No. 44814 HP4202E
V1.0

Healthy Living



Healthy Weight and Active Living

Simple steps to making healthy choices



HEART & STROKE FOUNDATION

Finding answers. For life.