**BENEFITS OF A HEALTHY BMI RANGE**

Having a correct BMI is of great benefit to your health and general well-being. It helps in preventing diseases that can lead to premature deaths. By establishing a healthy lifestyle based on a balanced diet and with daily moderate (at least half an hour daily) physical activity, you will find it easier to manage your weight and keep a healthy BMI.

**RISKS OF BEING OVERWEIGHT**

Once your BMI is greater than 25, your risk to disease increases dramatically. Persons who are overweight or obese are at risk of having an elevated blood glucose level and increased blood pressure. There might also be high cholesterol levels.

Overweight persons are therefore, strongly advised to consult their family doctor and check their general state of health. They are also encouraged to start losing weight gradually at the rate of not more than 1kg per week.

---

**FLOW CHART FOR BMI ACTION**

1. Take weight in kg
2. Take height in m & square it
3. Calculate your BMI as follows: Weight / Height²
4. If Underweight: BMI < 18.5
   - Seek medical advice
   - You are within normal limits; maintain a healthy lifestyle
5. If Normal weight: BMI 18.5 – 24.9
   - Seek medical advice & possible referral to a nutritionist/dietician
   - Eligible for Weight Reduction Program run by the Health Promotion Unit
6. If Overweight: BMI 25 – 29.9
   - Seek medical advice & possible referral to a nutritionist/dietician
   - Eligible for Weight Reduction Program run by the Health Promotion Unit
7. If Obese (or greater): BMI > 30
   - Seek medical advice & possible referral to a nutritionist/dietician
   - Eligible for Weight Reduction Program run by the Health Promotion Unit

---

**PUBLICATIONS**

The Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate offers a number of leaflets and booklets for free that suit most categories of people. If you are interested in receiving a copy at home or a number of copies at work, just call us on 2326 6900.

---

**WEIGHT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES**

The Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate provides a free service to people of 18 years of age and over, who are motivated to lose weight. The programme is held on a regular basis throughout Health Centres in Malta and Gozo.

Health professionals trained by the staff within the Directorate act as ‘facilitators’ within the programme. These facilitators support and guide participants towards losing weight by teaching how to establish a healthy balanced diet and encourage physical activity on a regular basis.

In this way, adopting healthier eating and activity habits will help clients to lose weight healthily and keep it!

- **Nutrition Helpline**
  - 2326 6108
- **Be Active Helpline**
  - 2326 6115

---

**Health Promotion & Disease Prevention Directorate**

38, The Slipper, C. De Baseffy Str., Msida 2691 (1471) Malta

Tel: 2326 6000; Fax: 2326 6110; www.webmd.gov.mt
**IS YOUR WEIGHT TELLING YOU SOMETHING?**

The weight loss advice contained in this leaflet is not applicable to children or pregnant or lactating women, as well as athletes with highly developed muscles.

There are around 300 million overweight and obese people worldwide and Malta is no exception. In fact, Malta has become one of the leading countries in the world in terms of weight problems. Nearly 35 percent of the children being overweight or obese and approximately 68 percent of adults present with this problem too. Obesity, is the more serious form of excess weight.

**WHAT IS OBESITY & WHAT ARE ITS CONSEQUENCES?**

Obesity, the most serious form of excess weight, is a disease in which excess body fat accumulates to an extent that health may be adversely affected. It is a risk factor for heart disease and stroke, diabetes (type 2) and other ailments like back problems and certain cancers. It normally results from an imbalance between energy intake (calories consumed) and energy expenditure (calories burnt in physical activity).

Body Mass Index (BMI) is the method used to establish who is overweight or obese. To calculate BMI, divide your weight in kilograms by the square of your height in metres (m²). BMI is used to indicate your weight status and whether you are healthy, if overweight or if obese. Underweight also poses a risk to one's health. It is usually attributed to undernutrition and its consequences include: fatigue, depression, hair loss, thinning of skin, bruising easily, and loss of muscle (including heart) tissue.

**WHAT IS BODY MASS INDEX (BMI)?**

Body Mass Index or BMI (also known as Quetelet’s Index or QI) is a calculation that uses the weight and height to indicate how much body fat you have. It is calculated by dividing your weight in kilograms (kg) by the square of your height in metres (m²). BMI does not measure body fat directly, but research has shown that BMI correlates to direct measures of body fat.

**HEALTH RISK CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO BMI (WHO 1998)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>BMI (kg/m²)</th>
<th>Risk of health problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Underweight</td>
<td>&lt; 18.5</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal range</td>
<td>18.5–24.9</td>
<td>Least</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overweight</td>
<td>25.0–29.9</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obese</td>
<td>30.0–34.9</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately obese</td>
<td>35.0–39.9</td>
<td>Very high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morbid obesity</td>
<td>&gt; 40.0</td>
<td>Extremely high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: For persons 65 years and older, the ‘normal’ range may begin slightly above BMI 18.5 and extend into the ‘overweight’ range.*

**A WORKED EXAMPLE OF HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR BMI**

To estimate your BMI, follow this example. If you weigh 60kg and have a height of 160cm, first convert the centimetres into metres by dividing by 100, i.e. 1.6m. Now, divide the weight (60kg) by the square of the height (1.6m x 1.6m). The result is 23.4 which is within limits.

Therefore to summarise:

\[
BMI = \frac{\text{weight (kg)}}{\text{height (m)}^2}
\]

Another way to estimate your BMI is by using this chart. Locate the point where height and weight intersect. Read the number on the dashed line closest to this point. For example, if you weigh 69 kg and are 173 cm tall, you have a BMI of approximately 23, which is in the Normal white bracket.