

# Health tip: Healthier weight

According to the CDC, obesity is a common, serious, and costly chronic disease of adults and children that continues to increase in the United States. Obesity is putting a strain on American families, affecting overall health, health care costs, productivity, and military readiness. Obesity-related health conditions include heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer.<sup>1</sup>

Achieving and maintaining a healthier weight, which may improve overall health, includes healthier eating, physical activity, optimal sleep, and stress reduction. People with gradual, steady weight loss (about 1 to 2 pounds per week) are more likely to keep the weight off than people who lose weight quickly. A reduction of 3,500 calories equals one pound of weight loss. This deficit may be achieved by consuming fewer calories and requiring more through increased movement.<sup>2</sup>

## Ways to evaluate weight<sup>3,4,5</sup>

Body fat % category	Women	Men
Essential fat	10-13%	2-5%
Athletes	14-20%	6-13%
Fitness	21-24%	14-17%
Acceptable	25-31%	18-24%
Obesity	> 32%	> 25%

BMI	Weight status
Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5-24.9	Healthy weight
25-29.9	Overweight
30.0 and above	Obesity



### Waist-to-hip ratio (WHR) and waist circumference

Studies have shown that the size of one's waist (measured around the belly button) correlates directly to heart disease. A waist size greater than 40 inches for men and 35 inches for women is considered at risk.<sup>3</sup>

## Lifestyle tips for a healthier weight<sup>6</sup>



### Eat more colorful produce and include protein

Colorful fruits and vegetables contain fiber and water which adds higher volume for lower caloric intake. Fiber supports satiety and digestive health, both helpful for weight control. Protein helps prevent loss of lean mass through weight loss and aids satiety.



### Plan ahead

Having a meal plan helps avoid last minute choices such as “fast foods” and convenience foods that may be higher in calories and made up of less healthy ingredients such as excess sodium, trans fats, and processed sugars.



### Move more

Work your way up to 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, 75 minutes of vigorous- intensity aerobic activity, or an equivalent mix of the 2 each week. More may be required depending on your individual needs.



### Practice mindfulness

Mindful eating may help prevent boredom, stress-based and distracted eating habits. Increasing awareness and appreciation of food may provide greater satisfaction, physically and mentally, that may help reduce overeating.



### Get support

Getting support through available lifestyle programs, tracking systems, support groups or loved ones may help promote success by developing an environment aligned with your goals and providing accountability.

#### Sources:

<sup>1</sup> CDC. [cdc.gov/obesity/aboutobesity/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/aboutobesity/index.html). 2024. Accessed August 2025.

<sup>2</sup> CDC. [cdc.gov/healthy-weight-growth/losing-weight](https://www.cdc.gov/healthy-weight-growth/losing-weight). 2025. Accessed August 2025.

<sup>3</sup> ACE. [acefitness.org/about-ace/press-room/in-the-news/8602/body-fat-percentage-charting-averages-in-men-and-women-very-well-health](https://www.acefitness.org/about-ace/press-room/in-the-news/8602/body-fat-percentage-charting-averages-in-men-and-women-very-well-health). 2024. Accessed August 2025.

<sup>4</sup> Verywellhealth. 2025. [verywellhealth.com/body-fat-percentage-chart-8550202](https://www.verywellhealth.com/body-fat-percentage-chart-8550202). Accessed August 2025.

<sup>5</sup> CDC. [cdc.gov/bmi/adult-calculator/bmi-categories.html](https://www.cdc.gov/bmi/adult-calculator/bmi-categories.html). 2024. Accessed August 2025.

<sup>6</sup> Harvard School of Public Health. [nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/healthy-weight/2022](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/healthy-weight/2022). Accessed August 2025.