

Stay in shape



Body weight and cancer prevention

We know that by maintaining a healthy body weight, being physically active every day and enjoying a healthy diet, you can lower your risk of developing cancer. We know that these factors account for at least 30 per cent of all cancers.

If you are overweight or obese you may be eating more than you need for your level of activity. Being overweight or obese also increases your risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, gall bladder disease, gout, impaired fertility, lower back pain, osteoarthritis and many other conditions.

Am I overweight or obese?

It is best to use both Body Mass Index (BMI) and waist circumference to check body fatness.

Body mass index (BMI)

BMI is a measure of your body weight in relation to your height. To work out your BMI, you need to know your weight (in kilograms) and your height (in metres).

BODY MASS INDEX				
		Healthy Weight (BMI 18.5-25)	Overweight (BMI 25-30)	Obese - Class 1 (BMI 30-35)
Waist circumference	Men 94-102 cm Women 80-88cm	Lowest risk of health problems	Increased risk of health problems	High risk of health problems
	Men > 102 cm Women > 88 cm	Increased risk of health problems	High risk of health problems	Very high risk of health problems

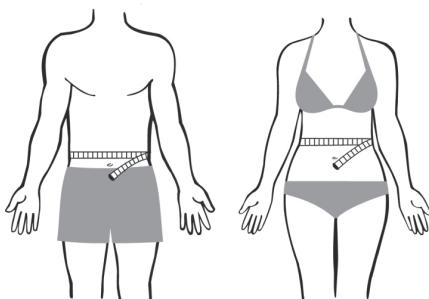
Example

Steve weighs 82kg and is 1.74 metres tall. To calculate his BMI: $82 \div (1.74 \times 1.74) = 27\text{kg} / \text{m}^2$

Steve's BMI is 27 and is in the overweight range. Ideally your BMI should be between 18.5 and 25. This is known as the healthy weight range. However, the specific cut-off measurements of BMI may not be suitable for all ethnic groups, who may have equivalent levels of risk at a lower BMI or higher BMI.

Waist circumference

Fat carried around the abdomen and waist is a greater health risk than fat carried on the hips and thighs for type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and post-menopausal breast cancer.



Men should aim for a waist circumference below 94cm. Women should aim for a waist circumference below 80cm.

A waist circumference measurement is taken at the narrowest point between the lower rib and the top of the hips (the iliac crest) at the end of a normal breath.

What should I do?

To maintain a healthy weight, enjoy regular physical activity and eat according to your needs. Make fruit, vegetables, cereals and other low fat foods the basis of your diet.

Losing weight to reach a healthy weight for your height isn't easy, however any weight loss will be beneficial. Remember that popular weight loss diets generally don't work in the long-term. It is better to make small changes to your diet and physical activity habits that you can maintain for a lifetime.

Plan to:

- Make it a priority not to gain more weight.
- Reduce your weight by 5 to 10 per cent if you are overweight or obese. Aim to lose 1 to 4kg per month.
- Cut back on foods and drinks high in fats and sugars – snack on vegies and fruit.
- Avoid fried foods.
- Choose non fat or reduced fat milk and dairy products.
- Increase your physical activity.

Remember, if you have any concerns or questions, please contact your doctor.

Ways to reduce your cancer risk

How do you stack up?

(Tick if you need to take action)

- Quit smoking
- Be SunSmart
- Maintain a healthy body weight
- Be more physically active
- Eat a healthy, well balanced diet
- Avoid or limit alcohol intake

Where can I get reliable information?

Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20

Information and support for you and your family for the cost of a local call anywhere in Australia.

Cancer Council Australia website

(with links to state and territory Cancer Councils)
www.cancer.org.au