

a HEALTHY weight

A person's weight and figure changes throughout childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. The ideal weight for one person is not necessarily the ideal weight for another. Being thin or overweight is not necessarily an indicator of good or poor health. Some thin people that don't exercise can be in poor health, while some overweight people that do exercise regularly might actually be in fairly good health.

A person's weight is one measure of their health. Having excess weight can contribute to certain health conditions. Research and studies have consistently found a link between excess weight and heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers. There are several measurements that should be used together to determine if a person is at a healthy weight.



- Body Mass Index (BMI) is based on your height and weight. A person's risk of weight-related diseases may increase if his/her weight is above or below the recommended BMI range. BMI measurements may be misleading if you are muscular or if you have lost a lot of muscle mass.

- A person's Waist Circumference is the distance around the body at the level of one's belly button. Waist measurement can help find out how much fat a person has stored around his/her belly. People who are "apple-shaped," and store fat around their belly, are at greater risk for

diseases associated with being overweight compared to people who are "pear-shaped," and store most of their fat around their hips.

In addition to the measurements above, a series of lab tests that measure cholesterol, triglycerides, and glucose levels are also helpful in determining if a person's excess weight is putting them at risk for certain diseases.



Eating disorders are considered mental health conditions, and often develop when people have an unrealistic idea of their ideal weight and how best to achieve weight loss. **Anorexia Nervosa** is essentially starvation or intentionally depriving the body of nutrition. **Bulimia Nervosa** is characterized by episodes of binge eating and then purging the body by vomiting or using laxatives. **Binge Eating Disorder** is frequent episodes of overeating without purging. All of these eating disorders are associated with health risks, and some are even life threatening. Anyone that has an eating disorder needs to seek treatment with a qualified mental health expert and a physician.

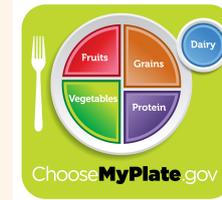


Achieving a HEALTHY WEIGHT

A person can best achieve a healthy weight by eating a balanced diet and getting regular physical activity. Keeping your daily food portions and calorie intake in balance with your physical activity is the best weight maintenance plan. Diets do not offer a long-term solution to managing weight.

Activities

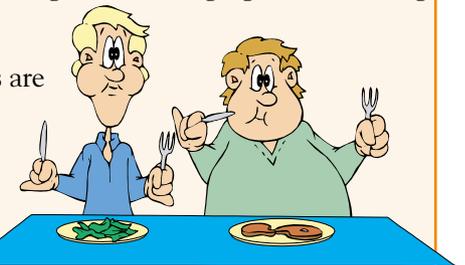
1. Go to www.choosemyplate.gov and get a personalized eating plan by entering your age, gender, and current physical activity level. You may also enter your height and weight if you know it.



2. Use the BMI calculator for children and teens at <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/dnpabmi/Calculator.aspx> to find your BMI. Remember, BMI is only one measure of your health and it can sometimes be inaccurate. Write your BMI down and place it in your health portfolio.

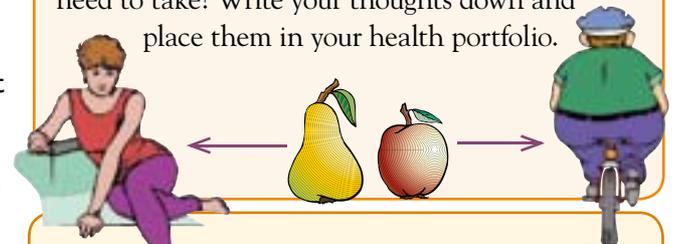
3. In groups, discuss how peer pressure can possibly influence a person's weight. What advice would you give an adolescent that had an unrealistic idea of their weight and began exhibiting signs of an eating disorder?

4. Adolescents are in a period of growth and development.



A normal and slight weight gain is part of this process. However, some adolescents gain an unhealthy amount of weight that could put them at risk for certain diseases. What healthy steps would you recommend to an adolescent that was gaining too much weight?

Home Connection With your family, discuss whether an apple shape or pear shape body figure is more common among your family members. Overall, do you and your other family members think some members need to achieve a healthier weight? What steps do they need to take? Write your thoughts down and place them in your health portfolio.



Discussion Questions

Why do you think maintaining a healthy weight is so important to your health?

Is weight maintenance a challenge for some of your family members?