

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**.



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 6000.

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

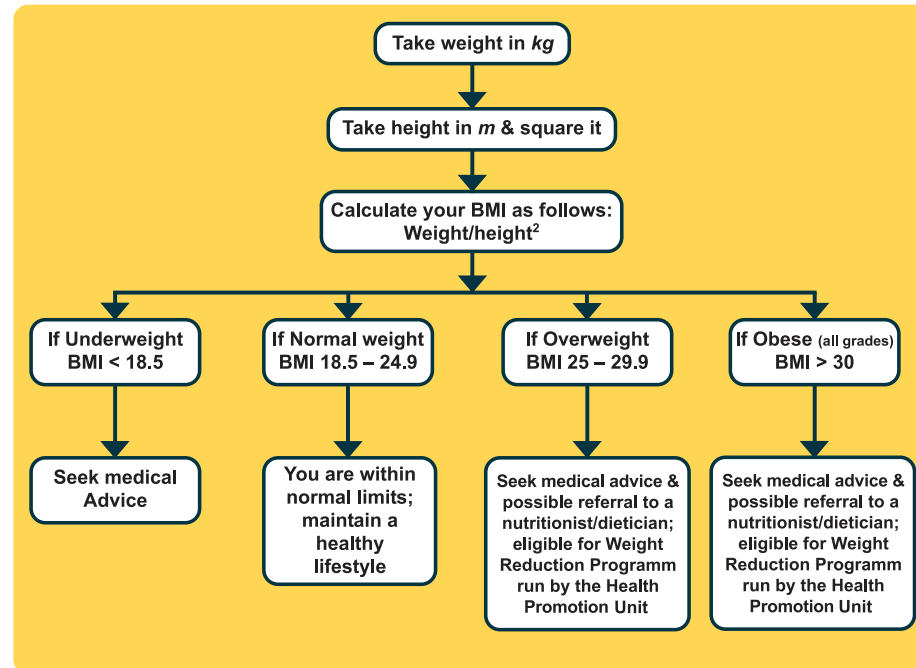
Be Active Helpline
2326 6115



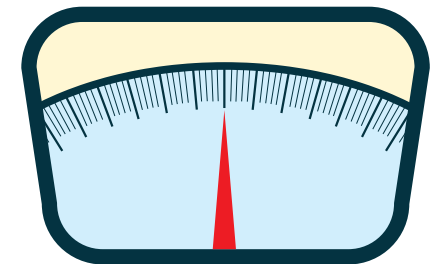
Health Promotion & Disease Prevention Directorate

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Tel: 2326 6000, Fax: 2326 6104, www.sahha.gov.mt

FLOW CHART FOR BMI ACTION



Is your weight telling you something?



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 (WHO)¹. In fact, Malta has become one of the leading countries having nearly 35 percent of the children being overweight or obese² and approximately 68 percent of adults present with this problem too³. 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; who has a normal weight and those who are underweight.

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)⁴. **BMI** does not measure body fat directly, but research has shown that **BMI** correlates to direct measures of body fat.



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HEALTH RISK CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO BMI (WHO 1998)

Classification	BMI (kg/m ²)	Risk of health problems
Underweight	< 18.5	Increased
Normal range	18.5 - 24.9	Least
Overweight	25.0 - 29.9	Increased
Obese	30.0 - 34.9	High
Moderately obese	35.0 – 39.9	Very high
Morbid obesity	> 40.0	Extremely high

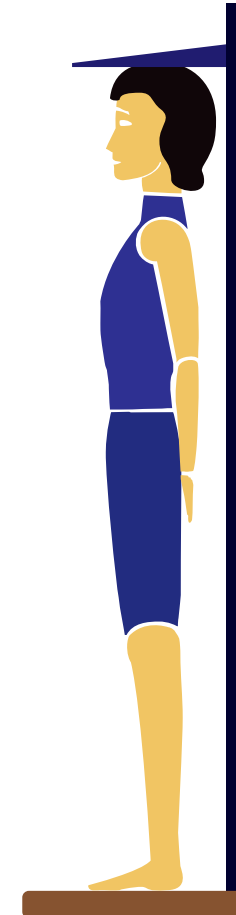
Note: For persons 65 years and older, the 'normal' range may begin slightly above **BMI** 18.5 and extend into the 'overweight' range.

A WORKED EXAMPLE OF HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR BMI

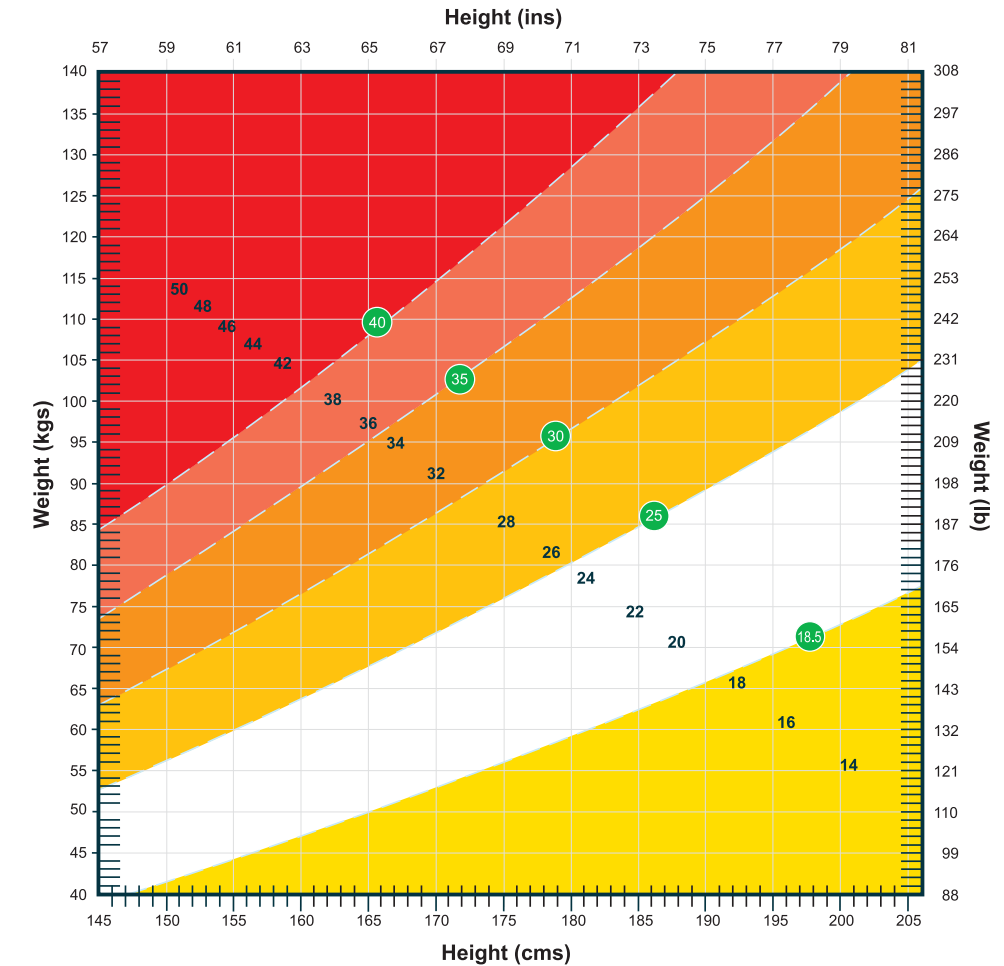
To estimate your BMI, follow this example. If you weigh 60kg and have a height of 160cm, first convert the centimetres into metres by dividing by 100. (i.e 1.6m). Now, divide the weight (60kg) by the square of the height (1.6m x 1.6m). The result is 23.4 which is within limits.

Therefore to summarise:

$$\text{BMI} = \text{weight (kg)} / \text{height} \times \text{height (m}^2\text{)}$$



BMI NOMOGRAM (CHART)



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

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.

Ref.

1. Nutrition Coach. Childhood obesity. <http://www.thenutritioncoach.co.uk/childhood-obesity.htm>
2. International Obesity Task Force EU Platform Briefing Paper, March 15, 2005
3. Food & Health in Malta: A situation analysis & proposals for action. Bellizzi M. *et al.* 1992
4. Human Nutrition & Dietetics. Garrow J.S. *et al.* 11th Edition, 2005