

## **BODY MASS INDEX - BMI**

Calculating BMI is one of the best methods for population assessment of overweight and obesity. It is a useful screening tool to identify possible weight categories that may lead to health problems for adults. BMI calculations are recommended and approved by the United States Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease, Control, and Prevention (CDC). BMI can be considered an alternative for direct measures of body fat. The following chart contains the published and accepted BMI categories from the CDC:

<b>BMI</b>	<b>Weight Status</b>
Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5 – 24.9	Normal
25.0 – 29.9	Overweight
30.0 and Above	Obese

The correlation between the BMI number and body fatness is fairly strong; however the correlation varies by sex, race, and age. At the same BMI, women tend to have more body fat than men, and older people, on average, tend to have more body fat than younger adults. Also, highly trained and fit athletes may have a high BMI because of increased muscularity rather than increased body fatness. Although some people with a BMI in the overweight range (from 25.0 to 29.9) may not have excess body fatness, most people with a BMI in the obese range (equal to or greater than 30) will have increased levels of body fatness.