

**Keys to Embracing Aging:**

**Know Your Health Numbers**

**How is BMI calculated and interpreted?**

**Calculation of Adult BMI (20+ years)**   
BMI calculation is based on the following formula:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Measurement Units** | **Formula and Calculation** |
| **Pounds and inches** | Formula: weight (lb) / [height (in)]2 x 703  Calculate BMI by dividing weight in pounds (lbs) by height in inches (in) squared and multiplying by a conversion factor of 703.  Example: Weight = 150 lbs, Height = 5'5" (65") Calculation: [150 ÷ (65)2] x 703 = 24.96 |

**Interpretation of BMI for adults**  
For adults 20 years old and older, BMI is interpreted using standard weight status categories that are the same for all ages and for both men and women.

The standard weight status categories associated with BMI ranges for adults are shown in the following table.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **BMI** | **Weight Status** | **What to Do** |
| Below 18.5 | Underweight | Consult a health provider. Low body mass can decrease the immune system and lead to illness. |
| 18.5 – 24.9 | Normal | Maintain exercising and eating healthy. |
| 25.0 – 29.9 | Overweight | Find healthy ways to lower weight, including healthy eating and exercise. |
| 30.0 and Above | Obese | At serious risk for heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, gall bladder disease, and some cancers, talk to a health care provider and modify your lifestyle. |

**Calculation and Interpretation of BMI for Children and Teens (2-19 years)**  
While the BMI number is calculated the same way for children and adults, the criteria used to interpret the meaning of the BMI number for children and teens are different from those used for adults. For children and teens, the interpretation of BMI is both age- and sex-specific. Age- and sex-specific percentiles are used because the amount of body fat changes with age and because the amount of body fat differs between girls and boys. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers a free online child and teen BMI calculator and interpretation information at <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/dnpabmi/>