

Don't weigh down your heart



Heart disease doesn't "weigh"

If you think that what you weigh is your own concern, you're absolutely right. However, if you think that what you weigh only impacts the way you look on the outside, you're wrong. There is a relationship between weight and heart disease that's very important to be aware of. Studies have shown that being overweight can lead to heart disease. In fact, if you tend to carry extra weight around your waist, it puts you at an even higher risk.^{1,2}

Know your body, know your risks

Lifestyle habits

People with weight problems are often getting too little exercise and eating too much of the foods that are especially bad for your heart: foods high in saturated fat, sugar or salt. Sometimes people with weight problems are overeating because of stress. Too much stress and eating an excessive amount of heart-unfriendly foods can lead to heart problems.

Lack of routine exercise or physical activity can also lead to heart problems. Even carrying around too much body weight can cause your heart to work harder. Maybe you have noticed that you have less stamina than you'd like. Or perhaps you have found yourself short of breath when you exert yourself, like when climbing a flight of stairs. If this is related to too much weight, then you may be weighing down your heart. So, if what you weigh is hurting your heart, maybe it's time to seriously consider making lifestyle changes in your diet and exercise habits.

BMI

The chart on the next page provides guidelines on what a "healthy weight" range might be based on your body mass index (BMI). BMI is calculated by using a formula that takes your height and weight into account. Making small changes in your lifestyle and BMI can have a big impact. Losing just three to five percent of excess body weight can help you keep your heart stronger. You may be surprised at the simple changes you can make in everyday life that can keep your heart beating with gratitude.

	Normal Weight						Overweight					Obese					
BMI Value	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
Height (inches)	Body Weight (pounds)																
58	91	96	100	105	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	148	153	158	162	167	172
59	178	183	188	193	198	203	208	212	217	222	227	232	237	242	247	252	257
60	184	189	194	199	204	209	215	220	225	230	235	240	245	250	255	261	266
61	190	195	201	206	211	217	222	227	232	238	243	248	254	259	264	269	275
62	196	202	207	213	218	224	229	235	240	246	251	256	262	267	273	278	284
63	203	208	214	220	225	231	237	242	248	254	259	265	270	278	282	287	293
64	209	215	221	227	232	238	244	250	256	262	267	273	279	285	291	296	302
65	216	222	228	234	240	246	252	258	264	270	276	282	288	294	300	306	312
66	223	229	235	241	247	253	260	266	272	278	284	291	297	303	309	315	322
67	230	236	242	249	255	261	268	274	280	287	293	299	306	312	319	325	331
68	236	243	249	256	262	269	276	282	289	295	302	308	315	322	328	335	341
69	243	250	257	263	270	277	284	291	297	304	311	318	324	331	338	345	351
70	250	257	264	271	278	285	292	299	306	313	320	327	334	341	348	355	362
71	257	265	272	279	286	293	301	308	315	322	329	338	343	351	358	365	372
72	265	272	279	287	294	302	309	316	324	331	338	346	353	361	368	375	383
73	272	280	288	295	302	310	318	325	333	340	348	355	363	371	378	386	393
74	280	287	295	303	311	319	326	334	342	350	358	365	373	381	389	396	404
75	287	295	303	311	319	327	335	343	351	359	367	375	383	391	399	407	415
76	295	304	312	320	328	336	344	353	361	369	377	385	394	402	410	418	426

Sources:

1. American College of Cardiology and American Heart Association, "2019 ACC/AHA Guideline on the Primary Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease: A Report of the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Task Force on Clinical Practice Guidelines," Circulation. 2019;140:e596–e646
2. American Heart Association, "Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics – 2020 Update: A Report from the American Heart Association," Circulation. 2020;141:e139–e596

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