

BODY MASS INDEX (BMI)

Ask Your Doctor To Tell You What Your BMI Is

BMI stands for *body mass index*. It is a number based on your height and weight. The more weight you carry compared to your height, the higher your BMI number will be.

You may have already heard that a high BMI can mean that you have an increased risk for diabetes, or for high blood pressure and other heart health problems. If you are a woman, *there is even more risk*.

Bile is produced in the gallbladder. In overweight people, this bile may contain more cholesterol—more than the gallbladder can dissolve. *This can promote the formation of gallstones*.

- As BMI increases, the risk for developing gallstones also rises. Studies show that risk may *triple* in women who have a BMI greater than 32 compared to those with a BMI of 24 or 25.
- The risk may be *seven times* higher in women with a BMI above 45 than in those with a BMI below 24.

So, when you next see your doctor, ask “What is my BMI?” If it is higher than it should be, ask what you can do to lower it and your weight. There are lots of good reasons to do this.

Children and Healthy Weight

Everyone is worried about the growing number of overweight children. One tool that a primary care provider uses to see if someone is a healthy weight is BMI, or *body mass index*. This is a gauge of the body’s fatness. A person’s height and weight are used to calculate the BMI number. Children’s body fat changes with age and is different for boys and girls. Because of these differences, a child’s BMI number is put on a graph to see how the child compares to other children of the same sex and age. This shows the child’s BMI percentile. The percentile is used to help decide if the child is a healthy weight or overweight.

Children’s medical providers will now check their BMI percentile during clinic visits. They will also discuss a child’s eating and activity habits.

To learn more about BMI, nutrition, and activity for children, go to:

www.uphp.com/Member_Link/WNE/member_wne.html