

## Healthy bodyweight fact sheet

### What is a healthy bodyweight?

A healthy bodyweight is the weight that's in the best range for your height and size - not overweight, and not underweight. Maintaining a healthy bodyweight means finding the right balance between eating well and being active each day. If you don't do enough physical activity to burn up all the fuel or energy you put in (as food and drink), the excess energy is stored as fat in the body, which causes overweight and obesity.

- Overweight - increases the risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, gallbladder disease, joint problems (e.g. arthritis, gout, joint pain), asthma, sleep problems (e.g. sleep apnoea), infertility, certain types of cancer, kidney disease and psychosocial problems (such as discrimination, social isolation, poor self-esteem).
- Obese - the risk of suffering from one or more of the conditions listed above is greatly increased.
- Underweight - is also associated with an increased risk of poor health.

If you fall into the overweight or obese category, don't despair! Being active and eating healthily will help to lower your risk, and if you can lose about five to ten per cent of your bodyweight and maintain this loss you can reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes by more than half.

### The benefits of maintaining a healthy bodyweight

There are many benefits of maintaining a healthy bodyweight. Here are a few:

- improved general health
- decreased future health risks
- more energy
- improved ability to be active
- improved self-confidence
- improve mental wellbeing - feel happier
- fitting into your clothes better
- getting more out of life!

### Do you have a healthy bodyweight?

There's more to staying healthy than being a certain weight, a certain size or a certain body shape. However, there are ways to check to see if your current weight or body shape is putting you at higher risk of illnesses such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some types of cancer. If you are male or female aged between 18 and 64, the tools on the Eat Well Be Active website (under Weigh it up and Measure up) can help predict whether you are at risk. If in doubt, check with your doctor.

### Your metabolic rate

A healthy metabolic rate (the rate at which your body uses up fuel or energy) is important to maintaining a healthy bodyweight. Being physically active helps increase your metabolic rate and maintain metabolically active muscle tissue, which promotes fat loss. Losing muscle can actually reduce your metabolic rate! Doing some vigorous activity or weight-bearing activities such as weight training, yoga, Pilates, stair-climbing or circuit training can help to increase your muscle mass and increase your metabolic rate.