



# Maintaining a healthy weight

Do you know that Malaysia is known as Asia's fattest country?

Why are Malaysians getting fat?

Is my weight healthy?

Why do I need to maintain my weight in the healthy range?

What can I do to achieve or maintain a healthy weight?

References

## Do you know that Malaysia is known as Asia's fattest country?

Malaysia recorded an increase in its obesity rate in 2015. The latest statistics showed that nearly 50% of the 30 million Malaysian population are either overweight or obese<sup>1</sup>

**30%**  
of Malaysians are  
**OVERWEIGHT**

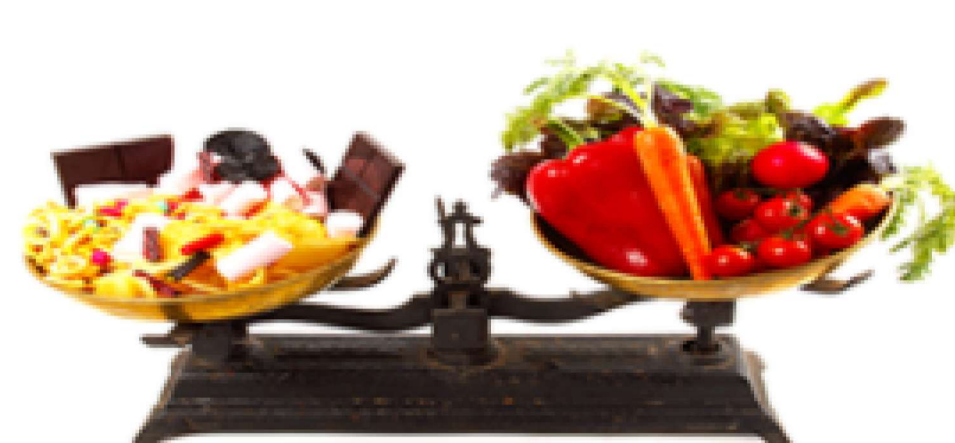


**17.7%**  
of Malaysians are  
**OBESE**



\*based on the world health organization (1998) classification

## Why are Malaysians getting fat?



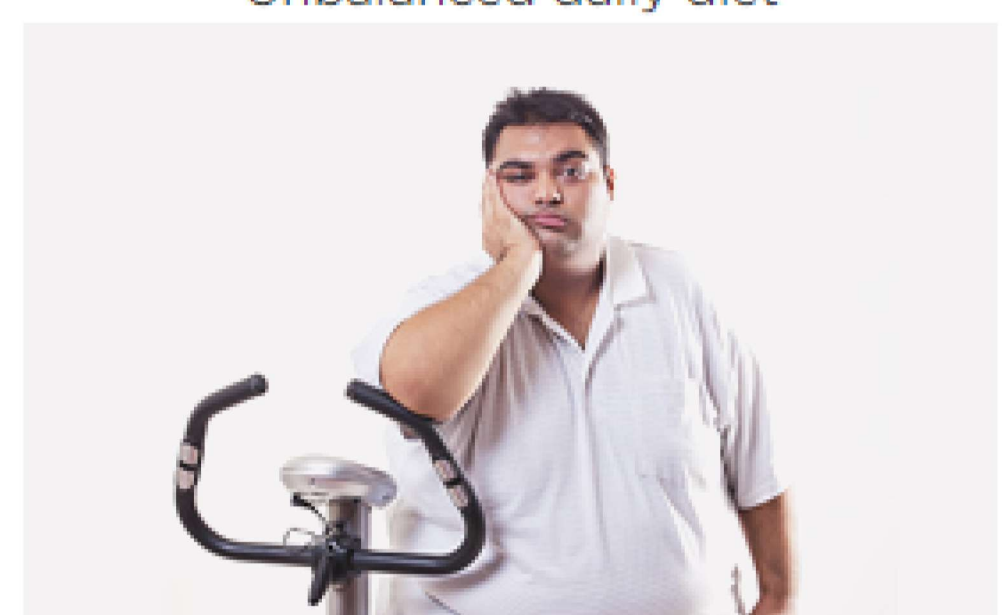
Unhealthy food choices



Unbalanced daily diet



Sedentary lifestyle



Physical inactivity

Age, gender and genetics can also affect one's risk of becoming overweight and obese.<sup>1,2</sup>

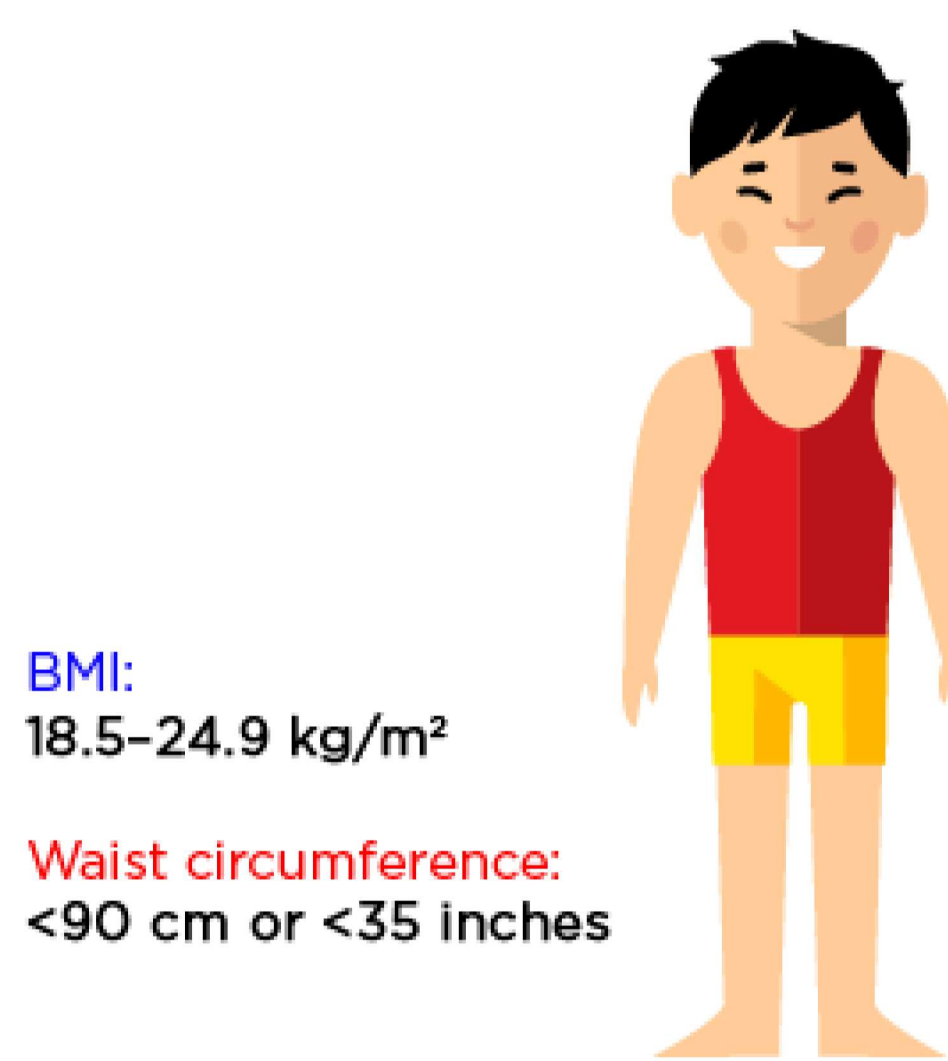
## Is my weight healthy?

Find out now by calculating your body mass index (BMI) and measuring your waist circumference.

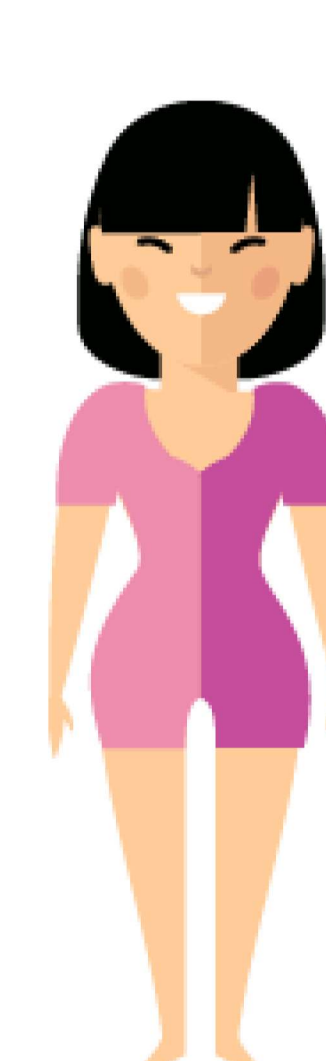
Healthy weight = Normal BMI + healthy waist circumference<sup>2</sup>

For men

For women



**BMI:**  
18.5–24.9 kg/m<sup>2</sup>  
**Waist circumference:**  
<90 cm or <35 inches



**BMI:**  
18.5–24.9 kg/m<sup>2</sup>  
**Waist circumference:**  
<80 cm or <32 inches

What is BMI?<sup>2</sup>

BMI = Weight (in kilograms) ÷ Height (in metres squared)

Weight definition	Under weight	Normal range	Over-weight	Pre-obese	Obese class I	Obese class II	Obese class III
BMI (kg/m <sup>2</sup> )	<18.5	18.5–24.9	≥25.0	25.0–29.9	30.0–34.9	35.0–39.9	≥40.0

Alternatively, you can also use online BMI calculators or download phone apps to calculate your BMI and know your weight category.

How do I measure my waist circumference?<sup>3</sup>

- Find the bottom of your ribs and the top of your hips
- Wrap a tape measure around your waist midway between these points
- Breathe out naturally
- Take the measurement

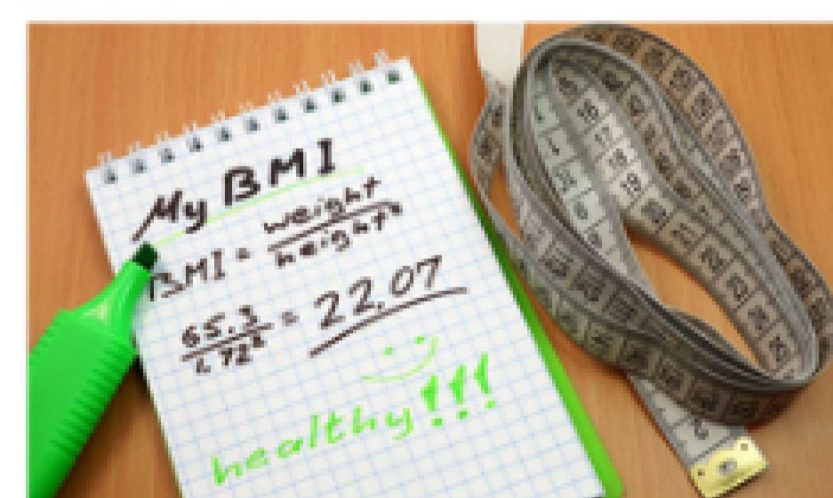


Some points about BMI<sup>2,3</sup>

- The adult BMI can be used to assess weight in those aged above 19 years old
- A separate BMI Percentile Calculator should be used for children and teens that takes a child's age and gender into consideration
- The adult BMI cannot measure body fat and muscle mass, and is not suitable for use in pregnant women
- Very muscular adults and athletes may be classified as "overweight" or "obese" even though they have low body fat
- Adults who lose muscle due to ageing may be thought of having a healthy weight although they may be carrying excess fat

Facts about waist circumference<sup>2</sup>

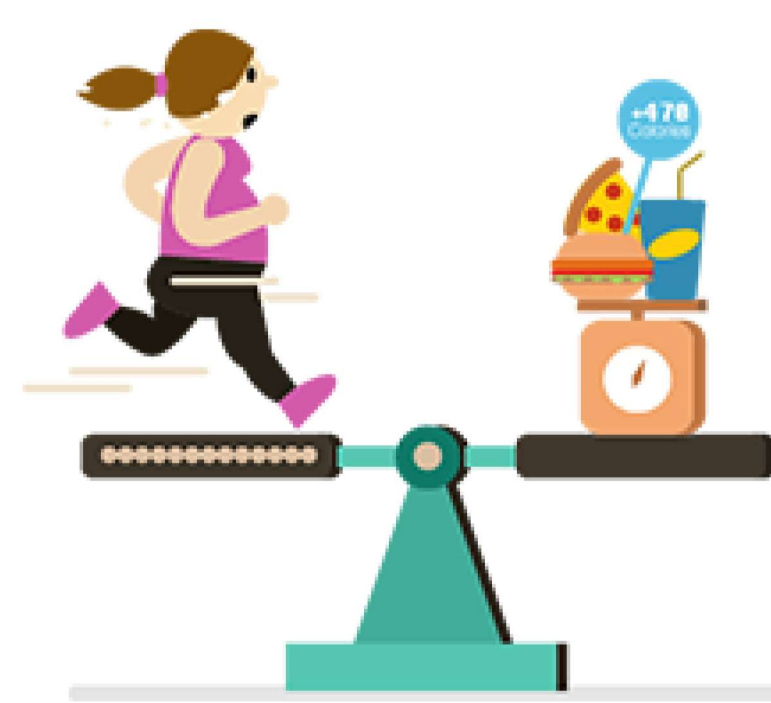
- High waist circumference has been linked to excess abdominal fat, which is a strong predictor for type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and heart diseases



## Why do I need to maintain my weight in the healthy range?

Achieving a balance between the amount of calories you consume from diet and the amount of calories you burn off via physical activity is crucial if you want to maintain a healthy weight for a lifetime. Nevertheless, this may be difficult for many Malaysians due to the multiple variety of delicacies that are easily accessible in the country, and increased use of labour-saving devices and technology that has largely contributed to sedentary lifestyle.<sup>2</sup>

It is important to maintain your body weight within the healthy range throughout your life. This is because whether you are underweight, overweight or obese, it is harmful to you and your health.<sup>2</sup>



Disadvantages of being underweight, overweight or obese<sup>2</sup>

Underweight (BMI <18.5 kg/m <sup>2</sup> )	Overweight and obese (BMI ≥25 kg/m <sup>2</sup> )
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increases the risk of anaemia</li><li>Results in low bone mass</li><li>Leads to distortion of body image amongst teenagers and young adults</li><li>Increases the risk of eating disorders (eg, anorexia and bulimia)</li><li>Is associated with greater mortality risk than that of normal individuals</li><li>Prone to infections</li><li>Results in difficulty to recover from illnesses</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increases the risks of diabetes mellitus, heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, stroke, gall-bladder disease, respiratory dysfunction, gout, osteoarthritis and certain types of cancer (eg, breast cancer, endometrial cancer and colon cancer)</li><li>Reduces quality of life</li><li>Results in depression, low self-esteem, job discrimination and other forms of social stigmatization</li></ul>

## What can I do to achieve or maintain a healthy weight?

You can achieve or maintain a healthy weight by balancing calorie intake with physical activity<sup>2</sup>

General tip

- Consume a healthy diet by eating according to the calorie recommendations
- Exercise regularly
- Reduce sedentary behaviour
- Monitor your weight regularly (at least once a week)

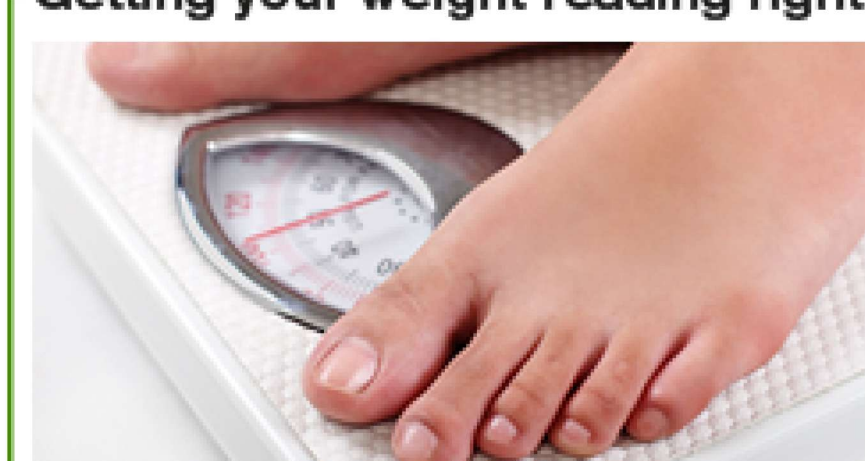
If you are overweight

- Aim for a slow and steady weight loss (eg, by setting a realistic weight loss goal 0.5-1 kg per week). You may refer to your may dietitian to understand your realistic weight loss goal better
- Decrease calorie intake without sacrificing other nutrients
- Gradually increase your daily physical activity

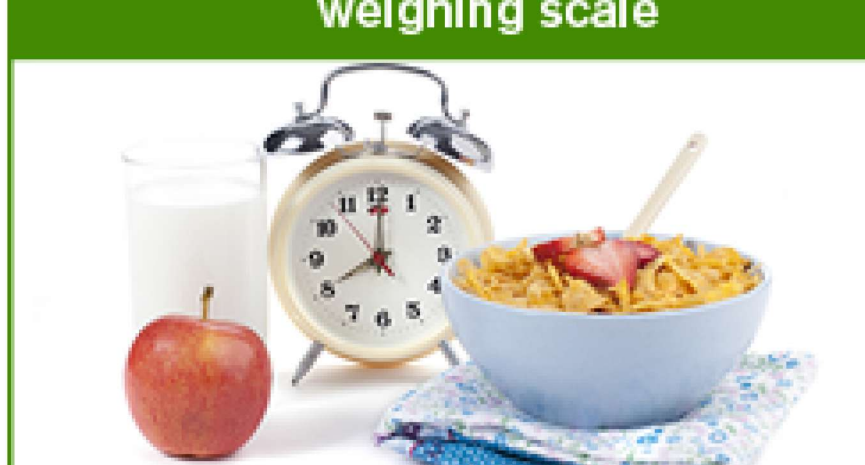
If you are underweight

- Eat three main meals and one to three snacks in a day
- Choose foods with higher calorie content
- Eat larger portions of food

Getting your weight reading right



Weigh in light clothing and without shoes, with a suitable weighing scale



Weigh yourself at the same time of the day, preferably before breakfast

Consult a dietitian if you need more advice on the types and amounts of food you should include in your diet to achieve a healthy weight.

## References

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- Ministry of Health Malaysia. Malaysian dietary guidelines key message 2-maintain body weight in a healthy range; 2010.
- NHS choices. What's your BMI? Available at <http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/loseweight/pages/bodymassindex.aspx>. Accessed 19 September, 2019.

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