

# BACK PAIN

## WEIGHT AND LOW BACK PAIN



### Introduction

The lower back bears the bulk of an individual's body weight. That is why excess weight can be a significant risk factor or cause of lower back pain or lumbar spine conditions.

### What is a healthy BMI?

As a number on a scale, weight expressed in kilograms or pounds is not necessarily an accurate indicator of health, since the way weight is distributed among muscles and bone, and fat is also important. For this reason, Body Mass Index (BMI) may be more helpful in understanding and controlling weight.

People tend to gain weight gradually over a number of years, so monitoring this number over time is advisable.

BMI is calculated by dividing body weight (in kilograms) by height in meters squared (m<sup>2</sup>).<sup>1</sup>

- BMI less than 18.5: Underweight
- BMI 18.5–24.9: Healthy weight
- BMI 25–29.9: Overweight
- BMI 30 and above: Obesity

Although BMI is a good indicator of total fat, it may overestimate body fat in athletes or individuals with a muscular build. Likewise, it can underestimate body fat in older people and those who have lost muscle mass. It is always a good idea to consult a doctor or fitness expert for the most accurate measurements.

### In this guide...

[Introduction](#) .....Pag 1

[Healthy BMI](#) .....Pag 2

[Portions](#) .....Pag 2



## How to achieve a healthy weight

A combination of regular physical activity and a low-fat balanced diet is by far the best way to achieve a healthy weight. Small changes can make a big difference, and the overall health and emotional benefits can be powerful.

Here are some practical tips for eating less:

- People eat for a variety of reasons, apart from hunger: social situation, boredom, anxiety, stress, and even happiness. The next time you reach for a snack, ask yourself “am I really hungry, or do I just want a break from what I’m doing?”
- Thirst can often be mistaken for hunger. When you have the urge to eat, drink a glass of water or enjoy a cup of herbal tea.
- Try using a smaller plate, dish out portions, and avoid buffet-style dinners - it can be difficult to stop eating with food in front of you.
- Don’t eat straight from the package - take what you want and then put the rest away.
- If most of your diet is healthy, then eating “unhealthy” food every now and then need not be a problem. It is important not to feel deprived. Cutting something out completely will only make you focus on it more.

### Watch portion size

You may be eating the right things, but could you be eating too much? Getting an idea of what a healthy portion looks like can be really helpful for keeping your waistline trim.

Each of the below is a portion:

- 2-3 heaped tablespoons of rice - a large handful
- A cup of pasta - about the size of a tennis ball
- A small chicken breast or cut of meat - about the size of a deck of cards

## Questions about your diagnosis?

### Unsure which treatment is right for you?

Did you know you have access to a free, independent and confidential decision support service?

Discuss your concerns and have your case reviewed by a specialist in your condition.

The decision is yours. And we’re with you all the way.



1. Mean Body Mass Index (BMI). World Health Organization website. [http://www.who.int/gho/ncd/risk\\_factors/bmi\\_text/en/](http://www.who.int/gho/ncd/risk_factors/bmi_text/en/). Accessed August 29, 2017