

# Women's *Heart Advantage*

## Heart Healthy Information: Maintaining a Healthy Weight

Maintaining a healthy weight is a very important part of preventing heart disease. Being overweight increases your chances of developing other major health problems that can cause heart disease, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and high blood cholesterol. Too much weight also increases your chances for stroke, heart failure, gallbladder disease, arthritis, and breathing problems, as well as breast, colon, and other cancers. The bottom line: a healthy weight

can help to protect your health — and even save your life.

### Do you need to take off some pounds?

You can find out if you need to lose weight by taking these three simple steps.

### Step 1. Find out your Body Mass Index (BMI).

Your weight in relation to your height gives you a number called “body mass index.” Take a look at the chart below to determine your BMI.

	Normal Range				Overweight Range					Obese Range			
BMI	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33
Height (inches)	Weight (pounds)												
4'10"	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	148	153	158
4'11"	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163
5'0"	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168
5'1"	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	164	169	174
5'2"	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	169	175	180
5'3"	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	175	180	186
5'4"	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	180	186	192
5'5"	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	186	192	198
5'6"	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	192	198	204
5'7"	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	198	204	211
5'8"	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	203	210	216
5'9"	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	209	216	223
5'10"	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216	222	229
5'11"	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222	229	236
6'0"	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222	235	242
6'1"	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	235	242	250
6'2"	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	241	249	256
6'3"	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	248	256	264

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(Weight is measured with underclothes and no shoes.)



Santa Cruz  
Medical Foundation

A Sutter Health Affiliate

Women's Heart Advantage is an educational program sponsored by the doctors, nurses and hospitals of Sutter Health to raise awareness of women's heart disease, risk factors, early detection, and treatment. This information is provided to help you understand how certain factors can affect your chances for heart disease and how to help control them. For more information, visit [www.hearts.sutterhealth.org](http://www.hearts.sutterhealth.org).

## What does your BMI mean?

**Normal weight:** BMI of 18.5 - 24.9.

Do not gain weight; you are in the normal range.

**Overweight:** BMI of 25 - 29.9.

Start a weight loss program, especially if your waistline is big. For heart healthy living, your goal is to maintain a normal weight with BMI of 18.5 - 24.9.

**Obese:** BMI is 30 or greater

You need to lose weight. Lose weight slowly — about 1/2 to 2 pounds a week. See your doctor or a nutritionist if you need help.

**Step 2. Measure your waistline.** For women, a waistline measurement of over 35 inches increases the risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and other serious health problems. To measure your waist correctly, stand and place a tape measure around your middle just above your hipbones. Measure your waist just after you exhale.

**Step 3. Find out your other risk factors for heart disease.** It is important to know whether you have any of the following: high blood pressure, high LDL cholesterol (bad cholesterol), low HDL cholesterol (good cholesterol), high triglycerides, high blood sugar, family history of heart disease, lack of exercise, or cigarette smoking.

If you are over the age of 55 or have gone through menopause you also are at greater risk for heart disease. If you are not sure whether you have some of these risk factors, consult with your doctor.

While you should talk to your doctor about whether or not you should lose weight, use the following to guide you:

- If you are overweight AND have two or more other risk factors, or if you are obese, you should lose weight.
- If you are overweight, have a waistline of over 35 inches, AND have other risk factors, you should lose weight.
- If you are overweight, but do not have a big waistline, and have fewer than two other risk factors, you should avoid gaining more weight.

### Small changes make a big difference

A small weight loss, just 5 to 10 percent of your current weight, will help to lower your risk of heart disease and other serious health problems. The best way to take off pounds is to do so slowly, by getting more exercise and eating a balanced diet that is low in calories and fat. Check with your doctor before starting a weight loss program.



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