

BMI and Beyond

If you're wondering what the best weight is for you, calculating your BMI may help.

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a common method used to estimate body fat based on height and weight. Generally speaking, a BMI of 18.5 to 24.9 is considered healthy. A BMI of 25 is a sign of being overweight and 30 or greater indicates obesity. Keeping your BMI within a healthy range can greatly reduce your chance of stroke or heart disease.



But BMI alone doesn't tell the whole story. Athletes who have a lot of muscle could have a high BMI without actually being overweight. Also, there are additional health risks if your weight settles around your waistline. For this reason, waist circumference can also be a useful measurement. Men with a 40-inch or larger waist and women with a waist size of 35 inches or more are at increased risk of disease.

These measurements, plus your exercise habits and family history, will help you assess and lower your risk of disease. To check your BMI, go to www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi. *Think of these tools as your yardstick to better health.*

■ DR. ZORBA'S LONGEVITY CORNER

STRESS AND YOUR HEART According to research from *Archives of General Psychiatry*, some extreme stress reactions to 9/11 appear to have caused heart attacks. The study looked at nearly 3,000 people who completed an online assessment before and after the terrorist attack. Only 20 percent had heart problems before the attack, but three years later that figure jumped to 30 percent. Those who felt "fine" before the event but "stressed" afterward were 50 percent more likely to have heart attacks. Stress plays a role in heart disease, so if you're stressed, let your health care provider know so you can get the help you need.

Makeover for Summer Food Favorites

Summer and outdoor barbecues go hand in hand. But greasy hamburgers and mayo-drenched pasta salads aren't kind to your waistline. *Luckily, you can prepare healthier versions of summertime favorites by using a few tricks:*

● **Burgers and More** - Choose extra-lean ground beef and add in onions, peppers or mushrooms for moistness. Add flavor with hot peppers or steak sauce. Marinate lean cuts of steak, such as top sirloin or top round, for tenderness. Buy reduced-fat hot dogs, and skip the cheese and chili — instead use onions, ketchup, mustard or relish.

● **Chips and Dips** - Make fresh salsa instead of creamy dips. Bake (rather than fry) appetizers, and buy reduced or low-fat chips.

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"You can complain because roses have thorns, or you can rejoice because thorns have roses." — Tom Wilson

MIDLIFE CHANGES FOR MEN

While men don't experience anything as dramatic as menopause, they do undergo a number of changes in their forties and fifties. Some of the most common midlife concerns include:

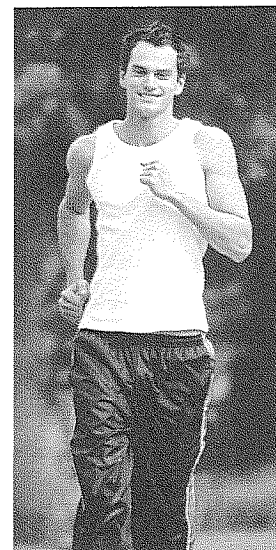
■ **Hormonal decline:** After age 40, testosterone begins to decline by about 1 percent a year. Most men under 60 don't notice this change, but some men are bothered by decreased sex drive, loss of energy and other symptoms. Exercise, especially weight training, may help slow this decline. Testosterone replacement may also be an option, but its effectiveness has been questioned.

■ **Midlife crisis:** Research suggests that this idea is largely a myth. Men typically experience middle age as a time of greater stability, financial security and good health. However, those who have

experienced multiple losses or serious health problems may have more difficulty coping.

■ **Benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH):** This condition, involving enlargement of the prostate gland, affects 40 percent of men in their 50s and 90 percent of men in their 80s. BPH can cause urinary difficulties, although most men have no symptoms. BPH does not appear to be preventable, but it can be treated with medication or surgery.

The bottom line: This phase of life can present some challenges, but men who maintain a healthy weight and blood pressure, avoid tobacco and excessive alcohol, and stay physically fit are more likely to enjoy good health in midlife.





Getting the Jump on Jet Lag

Flying across more than two or three time zones can lead to jet lag — the fatigue and irritability that occurs when your body clock is out of sync with local time. *These suggestions may help you adjust more easily on your next trip.*

Before Your Trip:

- ✓ Make sure you get enough sleep.
- ✓ A few days prior to eastbound trips, begin going to bed and waking up an hour earlier than usual. If going west, go to bed later.
- ✓ If you think you might need a sleep aid for short-term use, talk to your health care provider.
- ✓ Arrive in the morning or afternoon when traveling west or late at night when traveling east.

On the Plane:

- ✓ Drink plenty of fluids other than coffee and alcohol.
- ✓ Don't overeat.
- ✓ Exercise a little by rolling your feet, raising your knees and tensing and relaxing your legs.
- ✓ Avoid sleeping pills.
- ✓ If taking a "red-eye," bring an eye mask, neck pillow and earplugs to help you sleep.

At Your Destination:

- ✓ Adjust to the time change as soon as you can: Eat at mealtimes, avoid naps and go to bed at a reasonable time.
- ✓ Get some sunlight in the morning or early afternoon.
- ✓ Stay hydrated and eat familiar foods, if possible.
- ✓ Get enough sleep.
- ✓ Avoid caffeine, alcohol and exercise within a few hours of bedtime.

Summer Food Favorites ■■■ (continued)

- **Salads** - Cut the fat by 75 percent in dishes such as potato or macaroni salad by replacing regular mayo with half fat-free sour cream and half light mayo. Try whole wheat or spelt macaroni for your pasta dish and add in extra vegetables. Use lighter salad dressings (6 grams of fat per 2 tbsp. serving) and dark green lettuce for salads.
- **Chicken and Ribs** - Remove the skin and marinate chicken before cooking. Grill ribs with salt, pepper and garlic powder. Serve them with low-fat barbecue sauce on the side.
- **Sweet Endings** - When baking, replace half the oil in a recipe with applesauce, juice or low-fat yogurt. Serve low-fat ice cream, sorbet and grilled fruit. Use sugar sparingly or try sugar alternatives.

TIP: Maximize taste in your dishes by using highly flavorful ingredients such as fresh ginger or citrus juices, herbs, garlic, soy sauce, and sesame oil.

FOLLOW THROUGH ON TEST RESULTS If you're awaiting the results of medical testing, you may need to make a phone call. Often people assume that the results must be good since they haven't heard from their doctor. While normal findings are common, you shouldn't make assumptions without getting confirmation from your health care practitioner. **Remember: When in doubt, check it out.**

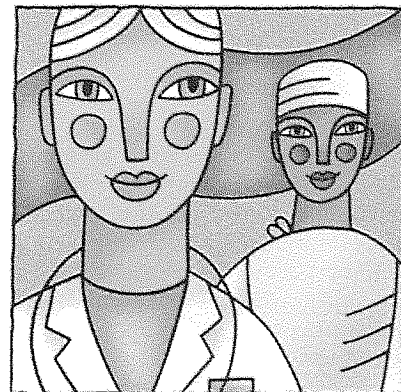
4 Questions to Ask Before Having Surgery

Facing surgery? Becoming well-informed about your procedure could help reduce your pre-op jitters.

1 What are my options? Can the operation be performed with a smaller incision, during a shorter hospital stay or on an outpatient basis? If so, choose the hospital with the most experience performing your type of surgery.

2 What are the risks and benefits? Find out what you'll gain from surgery and how long these benefits will last. What are the possible risks, side effects and complications? Meet with the specialist who will provide anesthesia, and review the list of all your medications, vitamins and supplements.

3 Is my surgeon qualified and experienced? Inquire whether your surgeon is board certified or qualified as an F.A.C.S. (Fellow of the American College of Surgeons). These certifications require completion of special training and qualifying exams. Don't hesitate to discuss your surgeon's experience and success rate with your particular surgery.



4 How long will it take me to recover?

Ask your surgeon how you'll feel after surgery and what you'll be able to do. Check if you'll need any special supplies or equipment when you return home. Get a date for when you can return to work and regular exercise.

Good idea: Some people find that it helps to bring a friend or relative along when inquiring about surgery, for support as well as a second set of ears. Write down your questions and concerns, and bring that list with you.

For more information, go to www.facs.org and type in "When you need an operation."

NEXT MONTH: A Cancer You Can Prevent