



Need to lose some weight?

Am I overweight?

To work out if you are overweight, calculate your 'Body Mass Index' (BMI). This compares your weight to your height and tells you how overweight you are and how this effects your health. Your pharmacist can help you to work out your BMI.

BMI	Category	Health risks
Less than 18.5 kg/m ²	Underweight	Risks include osteoporosis, infertility and lung disease. Speak to your GP.
18.5-24.9 kg/m ²	Healthy weight	Low risk of disease
25-29.9 kg/m ²	Overweight	Increased risk of type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, gallbladder disease and certain types of cancer
Greater than 30 kg/m ²	Obese	Higher increased risk of all the above diseases
Having a waist measurement of >102cms in men or >88cms in women also increases your health risks		

Taking the right steps towards a healthier weight

Managing your weight successfully means making realistic changes to your lifestyle that you can maintain. Quick fixes like herbal supplements and fad diets don't work in the long term. Here are some keys to success:

- Plan your meals and exercise. Set yourself realistic goals and use a food and activity diary to track your progress
- Think about barriers that you've come across before – and how you will overcome them this time.
- Become aware of triggers to eat (e.g. boredom eating or habits) and plan around them (e.g. Bring some fruit with you to work for a mid-morning snack instead of always relying on biscuits)
- Weigh yourself regularly.
- Aim for 1-2lbs (0.5-1kg) weight loss per week – this is a safe rate of weight loss and you're more likely to keep weight off than if you lose more quickly.



Lifestyle changes for a healthier weight:

Did you know just 10% weight loss will:

- Reduce blood pressure by 10/20
- Reduce cholesterol by 10-15%
- Decrease your risk of obesity related cancer death by 40%
- Decrease your total risk of death by 20%

- Take regular exercise. 250 minutes of moderate intensity exercise each week is recommended to lose weight.
- Eat regularly and avoid skipping meals. A healthy breakfast is the key to success – wholegrain toast, porridge or a wholegrain cereal with fruit are all good choices.

- Eat balanced meals and a wide variety of foods (see food pyramid as a guide). This means including some high fibre starchy carbohydrate (wholegrain bread, pasta, rice, potato, wholegrain cereal), some lean protein (meat, chicken, fish, eggs) and a large serving of fruit, vegetables or salad at each meal.
- It's about how much you eat as well as what you eat! Eating smaller portions will make a difference to you weight. Try using a smaller plate and avoid second helpings. See the food pyramid for further detail on portion sizes
- Aim for 5 or more portions of fruit and vegetables each day. Some tips:
 - o Try homemade vegetable soup at lunchtime
 - o Include some fruit with your breakfast cereal
 - o Try a chicken and vegetable stir-fry in the evening
 - o Bring some fruit to work with you each day – it can be handy to boost energy levels and combat the mid-afternoon slump!

Reduce your fat and sugar intake. Choose low fat dairy products, diet drinks, avoid adding oil or frying foods and try to keep sweets, biscuits and cakes to occasional treats rather than 'every-day foods'.

Drink plenty of water throughout the day (at least 8 cups) and keep alcohol intake within the recommended limits each week (up to 21 units for men or 14 for women)

The Weigh2live website is an excellent resource for anyone who is trying to lose weight. It's been designed by dietitians and nutritionists and gives free tips and advice to help keep you on track! Check it out at www.weigh2live.eu

Prepared by the Weight Management Interest Group (WMIG) of the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (INDI) for the Irish Pharmaceutical Union (IPU). WMIG, 2010