WHAT ARE THE HEALTH RISKS AND BURDENS WITH OBESITY?

What is obesity?

For adults, overweight and obesity ranges are determined by using weight and height to calculate a number called the body mass index (BMI). BMI is used because for most people it correlates with their amount of body fat.

• An adult who has a BMI between 25 and 29.9 is considered overweight.
• An adult who has a BMI of 30 or higher is considered obese.

To determine your BMI go to the website listed:

www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi
or
You can do the math formula:

\[ BMI = \frac{\text{weight (lb)} \times 703}{\text{height (in)}^2} \]

It is important to remember that although BMI correlates with the amount of body fat, BMI does not directly measure body fat. As a result, some people, such as athletes, may have a BMI that identifies them as overweight even though they do not have excess body fat.

Health Risks With Obesity:

It is not the amount you weigh, but rather how healthy you are. Eight out of 10 people who are obese have health problems. As weight increases to the obesity level, risks for the following conditions also increases:

• Heart disease
• Type 2 diabetes
• Cancers (endometrial, breast, and colon)
• High blood pressure
• High total cholesterol
• High triglycerides
• Stroke
• Liver and Gallbladder disease
• Sleep apnea and respiratory problems
• Osteoarthritis
• Gynecological problems (abnormal menses, infertility)

BMI is just one indicator of potential health risks. It is important to consider other measures such as the waist circumference. Because abdominal fat is a risk for the above diseases, a man’s waist should be less than 40 inches and a woman’s less than 35 inches.

Even a small weight loss (just 10% of your current weight) will help to lower your risk of developing diseases associated with obesity. For example, by losing from 200 down to 180 pounds, you have lowered your risks!
RESOURCES ON HEALTH RISKS AND BURDENS ASSOCIATED WITH OBESITY

**Aim for a Healthy Weight:** The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) provides global leadership for research, training, and education programs to promote the prevention and treatment of heart, lung, and blood diseases and enhance the health of all individuals so that they can live longer and more fulfilling lives.  

**Overweight and Obesity:** The Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (DNPAO) of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention is working to reduce obesity and obesity-related conditions through state programs, technical assistance and training, leadership, surveillance and research, intervention development and evaluation, translation of practice-based evidence and research findings, and partnership development.  
www.cdc.gov/obesity/index.html