

Time to take some healthy measures?



How do you measure up



Is your lifestyle affecting your health?

Our lifestyles can have a major impact on our health and wellbeing. Unhealthy eating and not enough physical activity can lead to an increased risk of chronic diseases such as some cancers, heart disease, and type 2 diabetes. A quick way to check your risk is to measure your waist.

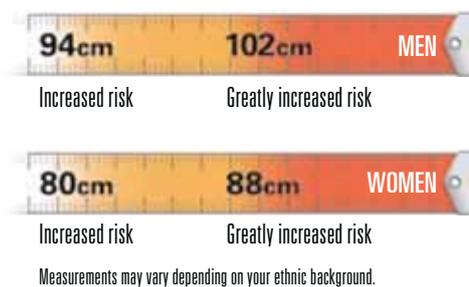
A waistline of greater than 94cm for most men or 80cm for most women is an indicator of internal fat deposits, which can surround the heart, kidneys, liver and pancreas, and increases the risk of chronic disease.

Overweight and obesity are risk factors for chronic disease. In 2005¹, 7.4 million Australian adults (54 per cent) were overweight or obese—2 million more than in 1995².

The good news is that the majority of chronic diseases are preventable for most people through healthy lifestyle choices.

Evidence shows that healthy eating and regular physical activity can help prevent or delay the onset of such chronic diseases.

This booklet will provide you with some simple steps you can take to reduce your risk of chronic disease and help you to lead a healthier life. Remember, it's never too late.



1. The latest year for which figures are available.

2. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). National Health Survey 2004–05: Summary of results. ABS cat.no. 4364.0. Canberra: ABS.

Are you at risk?

Measuring your waistline is a simple check:

To find out your level of risk, it is important to measure your waist circumference accurately:

- Measure directly against your skin.
- Breathe out normally.
- Make sure the tape is snug, without compressing the skin.
- The correct place to measure your waist is horizontally halfway between your lowest rib and the top of your hipbone. This is roughly in line with your belly button.



What does my waist measurement mean?

The waist measurements below³ (no matter what your height is) suggest that you have an increased risk of developing a chronic disease:

- **Increased risk**

Men: more than 94 centimetres

Women: more than 80 centimetres

- **Greatly increased risk**

Men: more than 102 centimetres

Women: more than 88 centimetres

The waist measurements above are recommended for Caucasian men, and Caucasian and Asian women. Recommended waist measurements are yet to be determined for all ethnic groups. It is believed that they may be lower for Asian men than for Caucasian men and are likely to be higher for Pacific Islanders and African Americans (men and women). The limited data currently available indicates that the risk factors in Aboriginal populations appear to be similar to those in Asian populations; and the risk factors in Torres Strait Islander populations appear to be similar to those found in Pacific Islander populations.

See australia.gov.au/MeasureUp for more information.

3. World Health Organization. Obesity: preventing and managing the global epidemic. Report of a WHO consultation. WHO Tech Rep Ser 2000;894(3):i–xii, 1–253; and National Health and Medical Research Council, Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Management of Overweight and Obesity in Adults, 2003, p 46.

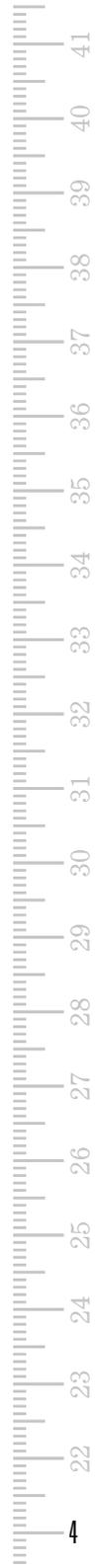
What about the BMI?

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a way of telling if someone is overweight.

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{Weight (kg)}}{\text{Height}^2 \text{ (metres}^2\text{)}}$$

For example, a woman 1.67m in height and weighing 65kg would have a BMI of 23.3. Over 25 means you're overweight; over 30 means you're obese. However, BMI does have some limitations. For example, BMI does not necessarily reflect body fat distribution or describe the same degree of fatness in different population groups.

Increasingly experts believe that the type of fat and where it is on your body may be more important than BMI—and that your waist circumference is really the figure that you should pay attention to. Even if your BMI is normal, if you have a waist measurement above 94cm for men and 80cm for women you may be at risk of serious chronic disease.



How can I be more active?

Along with healthy eating, regular physical activity helps you maintain good health, reduces your risk of chronic diseases such as some cancers, heart disease and type 2 diabetes, and can help prevent obesity.

Physical activity guidelines for adults:

There are four steps for better health for Australian adults:

- Step 1 Think of movement as an opportunity, not an inconvenience.
- Step 2 Be active every day in as many ways as you can.
- Step 3 Put together at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days.
- Step 4 If you can, also enjoy some regular, vigorous activity for extra health and fitness.

You don't have to do it all at once—you can accumulate your 30 minutes or more of moderate-intensity activity by combining a few shorter sessions of about 10–15 minutes each throughout the day.

Moderate-intensity physical activity will cause a slight, but noticeable increase in your breathing and heart rate and should be carried out for at least 10 minutes. Examples include brisk walking, bike riding, or kicking a ball with your kids.

Vigorous activity is where you “huff and puff”—where talking in full sentences between breaths is difficult. Vigorous activity can come from sports such as football, squash, netball, basketball and activities such as aerobics, speed walking, jogging, and fast cycling.

Note: If you are pregnant, have been previously inactive, or suffer from any medical conditions it is recommended that you seek medical advice before commencing vigorous physical activity.

Helpful tips for physical activity

Everyone leads busy lives nowadays and it can seem hard to find time for physical activity. Try to look for opportunities to build as much physical activity into everyday activities as you can.

Getting started

- Set a date for when you will start. Write the date down and stick to it.
- Choose activities that are right for you and make sure it's something you enjoy, or go for something different you've always wanted to try.
- Make an activity planner⁴ so you can put the times and days you will do each activity.
- Planning to do physical activity with others may help you to stick to your plan and achieve your goals.

Getting physically active

- Buy yourself a pedometer—a gadget which when worn on your hip counts how many steps you take. Use this to motivate you to keep increasing your daily steps (see 10000steps.org.au for more information).
- Catch up with friends by walking together rather than meeting for coffee or a meal.
- Try a new sport/activity (e.g. dance classes) or go back to one you have tried before.
- Visit your local library and check for local community activities such as walking groups in your area.
- Walk or cycle instead of using the car for short trips.

4. An activity planner is available from australia.gov.au/MeasureUp





Getting active with your family

- Play actively with your children—kick a ball around, skip, jump on the trampoline, or go for a bushwalk.
- Go on a family bike ride or take your dog (or the neighbour's dog) for a walk.

Getting active at work

- Keep a pair of walking or running shoes in the car or at work and you will always be ready for a walk/run.
- Go for a short walk during your lunch break.
- Start a walking group with work colleagues/friends and stick to a routine of certain days or times to go out together.
- Walk the long way to the photocopier, printer or fax machine or even to the bathroom and kitchen.
- Park the car further away from work or get on and off the bus/tram/train at a stop that is further away.

Keeping active

- Do not give up before you start to see the benefits. Be patient and keep at it.
- If you slip up, don't make it an excuse to give up—you haven't blown it, be positive and keep going!
- Let your friends and family know you're making healthy lifestyle changes that are important to you and ask them for their support to help you make those changes.
- Set a goal and work towards it—make it a realistic, short-term goal and reward yourself when you get there. For example, have a nice bath, take time out with a good book, buy yourself a new item of clothing, get a massage, or go to the movies/event/show/game.

Physical activity for weight loss

There are no “magical” solutions to losing weight. It takes time to put on weight and it takes time to lose it. You’re most likely to have long term success if you lose weight slowly and make changes to your lifestyle that you can stick with for life.

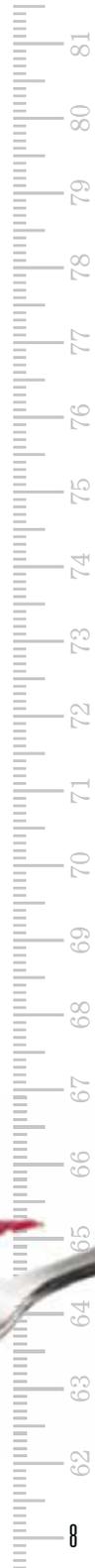
At least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity each day is recommended to maintain good health. If you are looking to sustain weight loss you should do **at least 60–90 minutes** of daily moderate-intensity physical activity and not exceed your kilojoule requirements.

What should I be eating?

As well as being physically active, healthy eating is recommended to help reduce your risk of chronic disease.

Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods including:

- Plenty of vegetables, legumes and fruits.
- Plenty of cereals including breads, rice, pasta and noodles (preferably wholegrain).
- Lean meat, fish, poultry, and/or alternatives such as eggs, liver and kidney, legumes, and nuts.
- Milk, yoghurt, cheese, and/or dairy alternatives such as fortified soy milk and soy based products. Reduced-fat varieties should be chosen where possible.





Helpful tips for healthy eating

Things to do:

- Enjoy a variety of healthy foods everyday.
- Eat more fruit and vegetables (at least 2 serves of fruit and 5 serves of vegetables everyday. See page 13 for serving sizes). Add fruit and/or vegetables to each meal and snack.
- Keep a record of your daily food intake for a week or so to see if your eating habits have changed.
- Eat regular meals—and don't forget breakfast. If you skip meals, you'll be more likely to eat high fat, high sugar food when you're hungry. Planning meals ahead can help.
- Eat more fibre by including high fibre foods such as oats, bran, legumes, vegetables and fruit in your meals and snacks.
- Drink plenty of water.

Things to limit:

- Consider your portion sizes.
- Eat less processed food.
- Limit your alcohol intake if you choose to drink. Alcohol is energy dense and can contribute to weight gain.
- Eat only moderate amounts of sugars and foods containing added sugars.
- Choose foods low in salt.
- Limit your intake of “sometimes” foods such as unhealthy snacks and take-away foods.



Snack suggestions

- Fruit and/or yoghurt blended together with reduced fat milk to make a delicious smoothie.
- Fresh fruit and vegetables, dried fruit or an occasional handful of unsalted nuts.
- Fruit bread and wholegrain bread or toast with healthy spreads like avocado or low fat cream cheese makes a filling, healthy snack.
- Low fat natural yoghurt with fresh fruit to taste.
- Wholegrain breakfast cereal with fruit and reduced fat milk.
- Fruits like oranges and grapes make delicious frozen snacks.



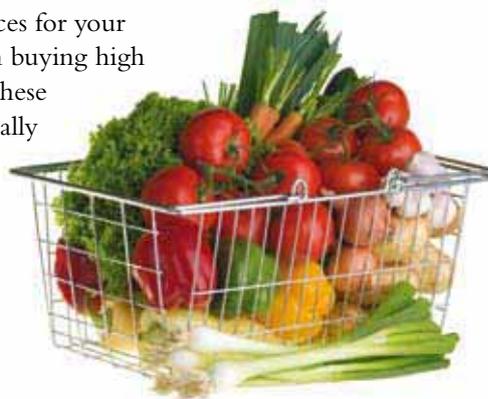
Cooking at home

When cooking meals at home use healthier cooking methods, such as grilling, stir-frying, light microwaving or steaming. These are better options than deep-frying or prolonged boiling. Healthy recipe ideas can be found at australia.gov.au/MeasureUp

Tips for grocery shopping

- Prepare a shopping list and stick to it. Avoid doing grocery shopping when you are hungry.
- Choose lean meats and trim the fat off meat. Try to limit processed meats (e.g. sausages or delicatessen meats such as bacon or salami) as they tend to be high in salt and saturated fat.
- Try to limit foods that contain a lot of energy, such as cakes, biscuits, chocolate and high fat snack foods.
- Buy low fat and unsweetened foods, but choose carefully—some foods advertised as “lite” or “fat free” may still be high in kilojoules.
- Read the nutrition information panel on food, especially for fat, sugar and energy (calorie/kilojoule) level, when shopping.
- Buy polyunsaturated or monounsaturated oils like sunflower oil and olive oil for cooking rather than saturated fats like butter or ghee.
- Leave juice and sweetened drinks like cordial or soft drink off your shopping list and drink water instead.
- Buy lime juice or herbs and spices for your vegetables and salads rather than buying high kilojoule dressings and sauces. These dressings and sauces are also usually high in fat and salt.

Play the virtual supermarket game at australia.gov.au/MeasureUp to find out how your trolley measures up.



Healthy habits — daily review

Use this checklist below as a reminder to make healthy habits part of every day. Check your results against daily recommendations (see page 13).

1. How many serves of fruit and vegetables did you eat?

Vegetables: 0 1 2 3 4 5 more

Fruit: 0 1 2 more

2. How many minutes of physical activity did you do?

0 mins 10 mins 20 mins 30 mins more

3. How many glasses (250ml) of water did you drink?

0 1-3 4-6 7-8 more

4. What other drinks did you have?

tea/coffee fruit juice soft drink/energy drink

cordial milk alcohol

5. How many “sometimes” foods (see page 13) did you eat?

0 1-2 more

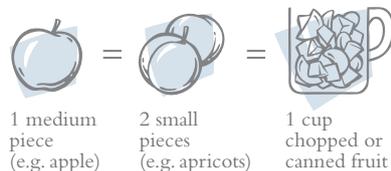


Daily recommendations

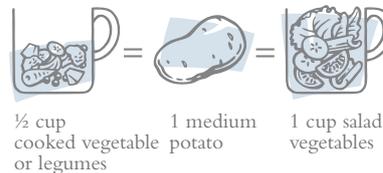
1. Aim for 2 serves of fruit and 5 serves of vegetables as well as a variety of other nutritious foods every day. Go to gofor2and5.com.au for more information.

One serve equals

Fruit



Vegetable



2. Do 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most days of the week (even if done in three 10 minute bursts).
3. Drink plenty of water. Water is the best and cheapest drink.
4. Limit your intake of drinks with added kilojoules/energy or caffeine, such as soft drinks.
5. Limit your intake of “sometimes” food. Sometimes foods are not essential to provide the nutrients the body needs and some contain too much added fat, sugar and salt. Examples include lollies, chocolate, biscuits, cakes, pastries, soft drinks, chips, pies, sausage rolls and other takeaways. Choose these foods only sometimes or in small amounts.



For information and tips, go to australia.gov.au/MeasureUp

Food diary / Activity planner

Are you eating to plan? Planning your meals makes it easier to stick to healthy food choices. Use the food diary to record what you actually eat, to keep tabs on how you're going. Make a note of what you could change or cut back on.

Keep a tally of your daily movement using the activity planner. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate activity each day. Remember that you can accumulate your 30 minutes (or more) of activity by combining a few shorter bursts of around 10–15 minutes throughout the day. Make a note of your progress.

To kick start your healthy lifestyle, go to australia.gov.au/MeasureUp to download your own 12-week planner.

Date	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast							
Lunch							
Dinner							
Snacks							
Drinks							
Activity and Time Taken							

Note: If you are pregnant, have been previously inactive, or suffer from any medical conditions it is recommended that you seek medical advice before commencing vigorous physical activity.

How do you measure up



Australian Better Health Initiative
A joint Australian, State and Territory government initiative.

For information and tips, go to australia.gov.au/MeasureUp