

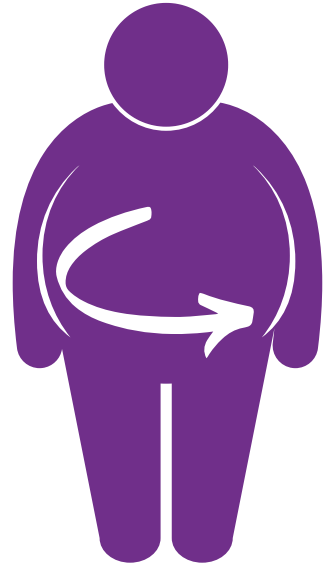
What is Overweight & Obesity?

The official definition of obesity is having a body mass index (BMI) of over 30 and morbidly obese if BMI is above 40

The current definition for being overweight is a BMI between 25 and 29.9, and for obesity is a BMI between 30 and 39.9 (1). Current definitions are as follows:

- below 18.5 – you're in the underweight range**
- between 18.5 and 24.9 – you're in the healthy weight range**
- between 25 and 29.9 – you're in the overweight range**
- between 30 and 39.9 – you're in the obese range**

This does not however take into account body composition (fat versus muscle mass) or fat distribution. Visceral fat around the central abdominal region is considered particularly harmful due to the close proximity to your vital organs. Waist circumference (WC) is often used to more accurately diagnose abdominal obesity, and this has a direct correlation with chronic disease.



A Healthy Waistline

Men: Desirable = Less than 94cm, High = 94-102cm, Very high = More than 102cm
Women: Desirable = Less than 80cm, High = 80-88cm, Very high = More than 88cm

Asian populations have different parameters and the World Health Organisation (WHO) uses a BMI over 23 to classify as overweight, over 27.5 for obesity, and over 37.5 for morbidly obese. Guidelines for waist circumference are given as $WC \leq 90\text{cm}$ for Asian men and $\leq 80\text{cm}$ for Asian women.

UK Statistics

The latest figures from the NHS suggests that 41% of men in the UK are classified as overweight and 26% as obese, in women the numbers are 30% and 29%, respectively, and 1 in 5 children is classified as obese. Children are more likely to be overweight or obese if their parents are overweight or obese(2).

Diet & Lifestyle Factors **Food is the first line of prevention against diet-induced illness**

The risk factors for becoming overweight and obese are complex and vary from one individual to another. They include genetics, socio-economic and cultural factors, stress, the health of your gut microbiome, inflammation, lack of exercise as well as your choices of foods and their preparation/cooking methods. BANT nutrition practitioners assess and identify all of these factors to understand how they may contribute to an individual's symptoms and health concerns. Practitioners consider every individual to be unique and recommend personalised nutrition and lifestyle programmes to support weight loss, rather than simply counting calories and following a generic 'one size fits all' approach.

1. <https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/lifestyle/what-is-the-body-mass-index-bmi/>
2. Lifestyles Team NHS Digital. Statistics on Obesity, Physical Activity and Diet, England, 2020.

