



What is an adult's healthy weight?

Body mass index (BMI) is often used as a guide for healthy weight
 For older adults the **healthy weight range is BMI = 23-30 kg/m²** $BMI = \frac{\text{Weight (kg)}}{\text{Height}^2 \text{ (metres)}}$



- The healthy weight for older adults is different from younger adults. It is in fact protective of good health to be heavier built. **Why?** Fat can act as cushioning for falls, nutrient reserves if unwell and weight loss through restriction.
- Each individual will have their own normal healthy weight.
- If weight loss is advised in an older adult, strict attention needs to be paid.
- Weight loss through diet restriction alone can actually lead to more muscle and bone loss and a higher risk of malnutrition.



Malnutrition (undernutrition)

- Occurs when there's insufficient intake of energy (calories), protein, vitamins, and minerals to meet the body's requirements.
- Older adults are at higher risk due to factors like diminished appetite, dental issues, swallowing difficulties, health conditions, and medication effects (e.g., post-surgery).
- Illness, treatments, medications, anxiety, fatigue, pain, and depression can impact appetite
- Malnutrition can present as unintended weight loss, muscle loss, pale skin, confusion, hair loss, slow wound healing, fatigue, weakness, and falls.

Tips to treat malnutrition

- Aim for six small meals across the day instead of three big meals
- Don't wait to be hungry - try to eat by the clock
- Avoid skipping meals - this can make you feel more unwell and less hungry
- Temporarily relax dietary restrictions; eat sugary and fatty foods
- Snack on nuts, yogurt with fruit, cheese and crackers, boiled eggs between meals
- Prioritise high energy high protein parts of meals and fluids; eat meat before vegetables and milk instead of plain water
- Include nourishing fluids like milkshakes, fruit smoothies, or supplements if needed
- Add cheese, dressings, oils, butter, cream, sauces, nuts, syrups to meals
- Eat two or three more mouthfuls past when you are full - every mouthful counts
- Keep ready-made meals in the fridge or freezer
- Share meals with loved ones for a more enjoyable experience
- Engage in gentle physical activity to stimulate appetite.

***Remember to always ask your dietitian if you have any questions including if this diet information is relevant for you.

This program is proudly funded by the Southern Cross Care Community Foundation.

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