

# Weight matters in heart valve disease

This leaflet explains more about why and how individuals with heart valve disease should have a healthy weight. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the healthcare professional caring for you.

## Why is weight important in valve disease?

- Being overweight increases the body's need for oxygen and worsens the effect of any type of valve disease. Reducing weight can delay and occasionally even avoid the need for surgery
- Being severely overweight makes operations more risky
- Replacement heart valves are less effective if you are overweight
- If you are overweight then reducing weight reduces the risk of many other conditions such as heart attacks, high blood pressure, some types of cancer and type 2 diabetes

## What is a healthy weight?

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a measure of your height and weight to help work out if your weight is healthy. You can calculate your BMI on: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/bmi-calculator>

The BMI ranges and classifications are:

BMI	Classification
Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5 – 24.9	Health Weight

<b>25 – 29.9</b>	<b>Overweight</b>
<b>30 and over</b>	<b>Obese</b>

Your weight (kg)

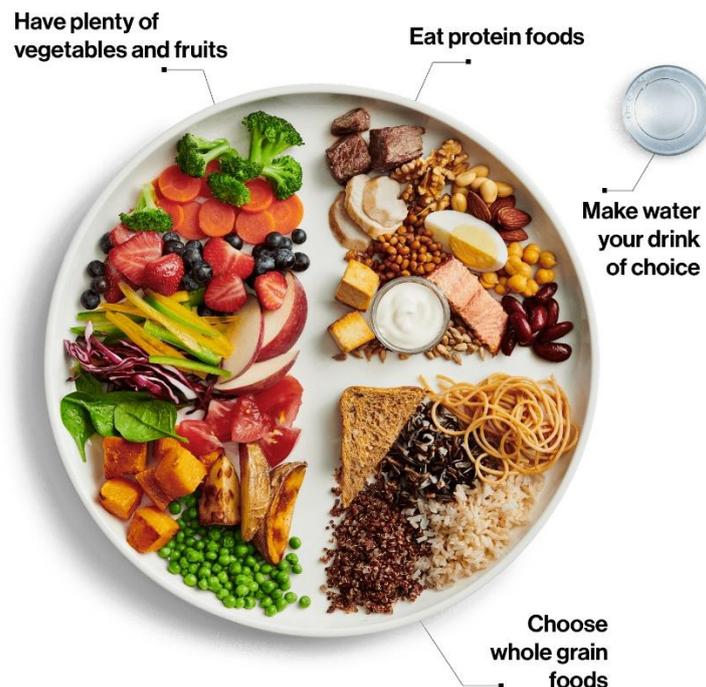
Your height (m)

Weight for BMI 25

## Steps to achieving a healthy weight

### 1. Changes to your diet

- People become overweight because they eat more energy (calories) than they burn. This can be due to eating large portions, frequent snacks or sugary drinks, or due to doing too little physical activity.
- Healthy eating is about eating a variety of foods in the right amount. There are groups of food that we should eat more of, like starchy foods high in fibre (e.g. brown rice and brown bread) and fruit and veg, and there are some foods that are high in sugar and fat that we should eat less of.



- The best way to get started is to make small changes over time. Here are some examples. Try one change every 2 weeks or so.

What you do now	The change	Achieved
<b>Large plate</b>	Small plate	
<b>Eat until full</b>	Eat until 75% full 'room for a little more'	
<b>Cook in butter, ghee, lard or palm oil</b>	Cook with olive oil	
<b>Fish once per week</b>	Fish twice per week	
<b>Eating seconds</b>	Avoid second helpings	
<b>White bread</b>	Brown bread	
<b>White rice</b>	Brown rice	
<b>4 potatoes</b>	2 potatoes or a small sweet potato	
<b>Sugary drinks</b>	Diet drinks or water	
<b>Pudding</b>	Fruit	
<b>Snack between meals</b>	A few unsalted nuts or a piece of fruit	
<b>2 pints of beer a day</b>	One pint of beer a day	
<b>Sugar in tea</b>	Tea without sugar	
<b>Blue top milk</b>	Green or red top milk	

## 2. Exercise

Any activity is good, even walking. This will not harm your heart valve disease. Try these simple changes:

- Use stairs instead of lifts
- Walk up the escalators or stairs at the tube station
- Get off the bus a stop early and walk the last bit
- Walk every day. If you have a smart phone or watch, try to reach 10,000 steps every day

## 3. Track your weight

Share this chart with your healthcare professional.



## Useful sources of information

### British Heart Foundation

The British Heart Foundation funds research into all heart and circulatory disease and their causes. The website contains a lot of helpful information on heart-related topics, including:

- Tests for heart conditions
- Heart valve disease
- Caring for someone with a heart condition
- Cardiac rehabilitation

w: [www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)

### British Dietetic Association

The British Dietetic Association is a professional body representing the dietetic workforce in the UK. Their core purpose is promoting health and wellbeing and ensuring that dietitians are recognised as leaders in diet and nutrition. Their website contains a lot of helpful information on nutrition and how a dietitian can support you on your journey.

w: <https://www.bda.uk.com/food-health.html>

### Weight Management Support Groups

There are a number of support groups available, such as Slimming World or Weight Watchers that can support you in achieving a healthy lifestyle. Information about the available services in your area can be found by visiting:

w: [www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Weight-loss-support-groups/LocationSearch/1429](http://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Weight-loss-support-groups/LocationSearch/1429)

### NHS website

Online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing.

w: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about valve disease, please contact your heart team or GP in the first instance

*Space for contact details*