

Managing your weight after transplant



After your transplant, you'll probably find that your appetite improves. This is great news as long as it doesn't lead to excessive weight gain.

Being overweight puts you at greater risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, stroke, chronic rejection and loss of the transplant.

You have good reasons to achieve and maintain a healthy weight by eating a balanced diet and making healthy lifestyle choices.

What is a healthy weight for you?

Your dietitian will work out what a healthy weight range is for you and help you set a reasonable weight goal if you need to lose weight.

Current weight:
Healthy weight range:
Weight target:

It's all about balance

Managing your weight and preventing weight gain is about balancing the energy (calories) you consume in food and drink with the energy you burn up throughout the day. To reduce your weight, you need to burn more energy and consume fewer calories.

It is important that you discuss the most appropriate strategies for achieving and/or maintaining a healthy weight with your dietitian.

The key to weight loss is to base your meals around nutritious whole foods: fruit and vegetables, grains and cereals, lean meat and meat alternatives, whilst reducing calorie-rich food and drinks.

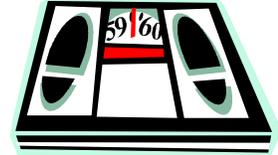
Reduce the energy you consume

Here are some strategies for reducing the kilojoules you consume:

- Cut the fat you eat – choose lean meats, take the skin off chicken, eat low fat dairy foods, cook with minimal oil.
- Reduce the size of your meals and snacks.
- Eat plenty of colourful vegetables and fruits.
- Limit or avoid sugary drinks, including juice.
- Limit alcohol – it is almost as energy-dense as fat

Burn more energy

Physical activity burns up energy and plays a very important role in achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. Regular exercise may also improve your blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes control, as well as your sense of well-being. It is important that you choose activities you enjoy and that you set aside time every day for some planned activity. As with changes to your eating habits, make gradual and enjoyable changes to your physical activity levels. If you have not exercised for some time or you intend to start a new activity, speak to your doctor.



Body mass index (BMI)

One way to check whether your weight is within a healthy range is to calculate your body mass index (BMI). To do this, divide your weight (measured in kg) by your height (measured in m) squared:

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

BMI and health

A **BMI of 21-25 kg/m²** is linked to the best health outcomes after a kidney transplant.

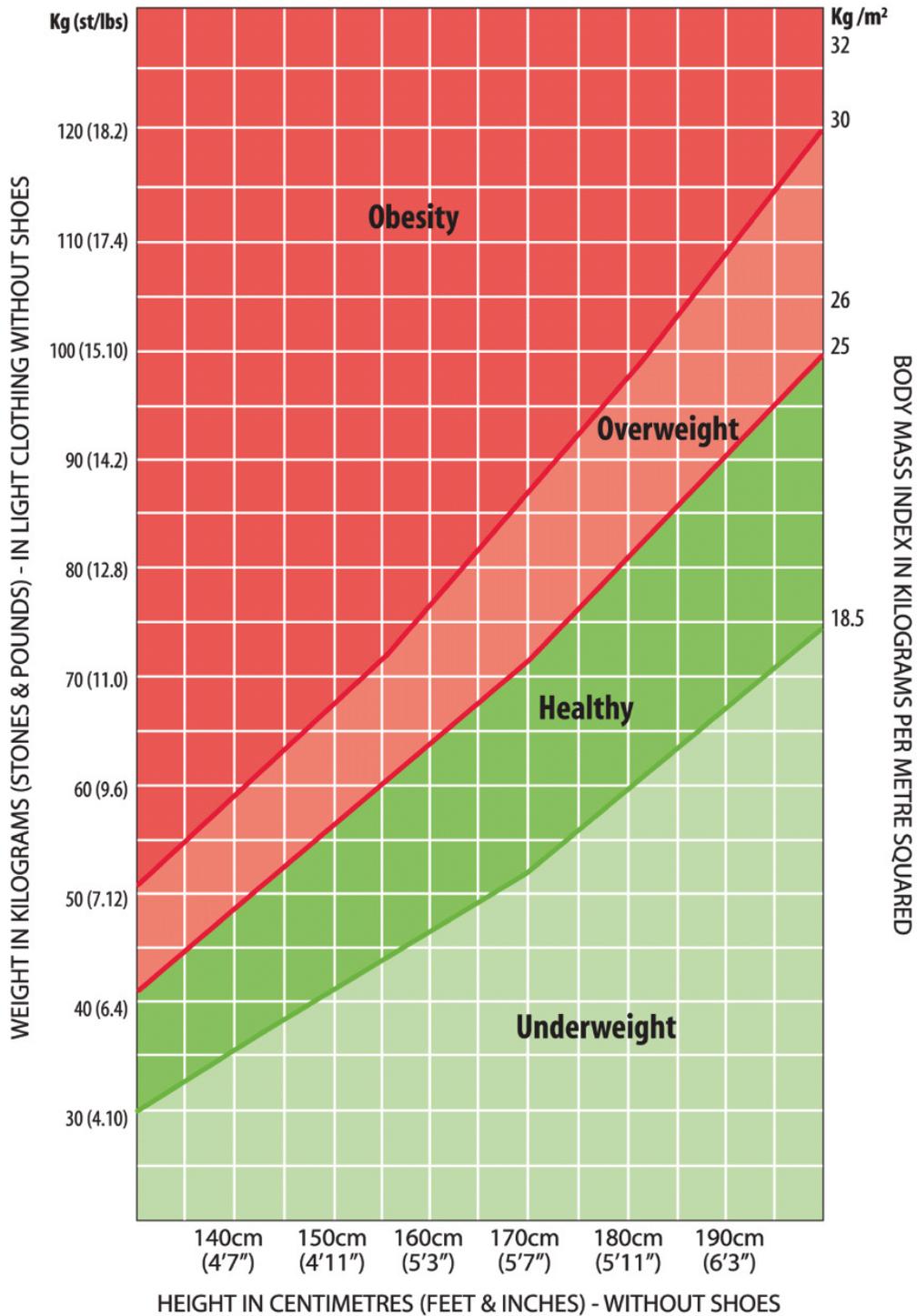
A **BMI above 30 kg/m²** places you at risk of heart and blood vessel disease, diabetes, as well as chronic and acute rejection and loss of your transplant.

A **BMI below 21kg/m²** places you at higher risk of infections.

If you are concerned about your body weight, speak to your dietitian or doctor.

This fact sheet is based on the *Evidence-based Guidelines for the Nutritional Management of Adult Kidney Transplant Recipients*, developed with funding from the NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation (formerly GMCT). The information has been independently reviewed by the Dietitians Association of Australia. For expert nutrition and dietary advice contact an Accredited Practising Dietitian. Visit 'Find an Accredited Practising Dietitian' at www.daa.asn.au or call 1800 812 942.

What is your BMI?



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