

## Aim for your healthy weight in 2013

Many of us make New Year's resolutions to lose weight. Countless diets and weight loss aids are advertised to help us reach our "ideal weight," but what is the weight you need to be healthy?

Results of a recent Gallup poll show that American men and women are increasing their idea of the ideal weight. On average, the men surveyed said their ideal weight is 185 pounds. For women, ideal was stated as 140 pounds. On average, both men and women also admitted they were above their ideal weight.

So how do we find out what our ideal, healthy weight really is? One popular way of determining that is to measure your Body Mass Index (BMI), which is a ratio of height to weight. You can calculate your BMI by using this formula:

BMI = Weight (pounds) multiplied by 703, divided by height (inches) and divided again by height (inches).

- Underweight: less than 18.5
- Normal weight: 18.5 to 24.9
- Overweight: 25 to 29.9
- Obese: 30 or more

It's important to keep in mind that BMI does not take into account your age, gender, body fat or muscle mass; there is more than BMI that needs to be looked at when determining your healthy weight and overall risk for chronic disease. Health professionals do further checks, such as reviewing your diet and exercise patterns, looking at your personal weight and family history, and assessing body fat percentages.

The key to achieving your healthiest weight is to avoid chronic dieting and adopt a gradual change in lifestyle:

- Slowly add more physical activity into your daily routine until you reach the recommended minimum of 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week.
- Gradually improve your eating habits by selecting healthier foods, eating a balanced diet and reducing portion sizes.

For help in determining your healthy weight and to gain advice, strategies and motivation to reach your goal, speak with your health care provider who is always your best resource to help you get and stay healthy. Additionally, Independent Health employs certified health professionals such as nurses, dietitians and exercise specialists that are here to for you. If you are an Independent Health member, speak to one of our health coaches by calling 1-800-501-3439, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

**Have a Happy and Healthy New Year!**

