

## Activity 10.1

### What's Your Body Mass Index (BMI)?

A healthy weight range is based on a measurement known as the Body Mass Index (BMI), and you can calculate this if you know your weight and your height.

To calculate your BMI divide your weight (in kilograms) by the square of your height (in metres).

$$\frac{\text{Weight (in kilograms)}}{\text{Height (in metres)}^2}$$

- A BMI of **25** to **29.9** is considered **overweight**, and one of **30** or above is considered **obese**.
- If your BMI is below **18.5**, then you would normally be considered to be **underweight**.
- A BMI of less than **15**, with rapid weight loss and medical complications is sometimes used as criteria for hospitalization in the case of anorexia nervosa.
- People with BMIs between 19-22 live longest. Death rates are significantly higher for people with indices 25 and above.
- However, two people can have the same BMI, but a different percent body fat. A bodybuilder with a large muscle mass and a low percent body fat may have the same BMI as a person who has more body fat because BMI is calculated using weight and height only.
- *Remember*, BMI alone is not diagnostic. It is one of many risk factors for disease and death. As a person's BMI increases the risk for many diseases increases as well. It is important to talk with your doctor about other measures and risk factors. (e.g., waist circumference, smoking, physical activity level, and diet.)

When you have calculated your BMI, think about how this makes you feel. Are you dissatisfied with your weight even though your BMI may be within an acceptably normal range? What kinds of action do you think might be necessary if your BMI is in the overweight range?