

Getting healthy and staying that way is the most important thing you can do. It may help to think of your body like a machine. You need to make sure that your 'machine' receives the proper care and maintenance to work properly.

So, how do we 'service' our machines? Eating nutritious foods, getting enough exercise and staying mentally healthy are very important ways we can take care of ourselves. But with so many different images of 'health and beauty' available to us in the media, sometimes it can be confusing to know exactly what 'fit' means.

Luckily, there is a new **standard** that most health professionals agree upon. This is called the Body Mass Index (BMI). The BMI is one simple way to calculate if you are at a healthy weight. The measurement takes into account your height, weight and age. The measurement takes into account your height, weight and age.

**How do you calculate your BMI? Here's the formula:**

$$[ \text{weight (kg)} / \text{height (m)}^2 ]$$

**Example: Weight = 68 kg, Height = 165 cm (1.65 m),**

**Calculation:  $68 \div [(1.65) (1.65)]$**

**$= 68 \div 2.72$**

**BMI=25**

There are also BMI calculators available on the Internet. Make sure to use one for children and teens if you are under 20.

Here is a web link to more information about BMI and a BMI calculator:

[http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/childrens\\_BMI/about\\_childrens\\_BMI.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/childrens_BMI/about_childrens_BMI.htm)

### Now that you know your BMI, what do you do next?

- If you are at a healthy weight, simply keep eating right and exercising.
- If you are overweight or underweight, you need to improve your diet and physical activity level.

### How can you improve your health?

- Try keeping a journal for one or two weeks. Write down everything you eat. Don't forget to write down the portion size (amount) of food you are eating as well.
- Keep track of your activity too! Write down the type of exercise you did and how long you did it for.
- At the end of the week, read through your journal. Did you eat too many sweets? Did you get enough protein and vitamins?

Take a look at some of these websites for more information or, ask your parents and teachers for more information on proper nutrition and physical fitness:

⇒ [http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/healthy\\_living/nutrition/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/healthy_living/nutrition/)

⇒ <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/resources.htm>

⇒ <http://www.kidzworld.com/sports-zone/get-physical>