

# Risk factor: obesity

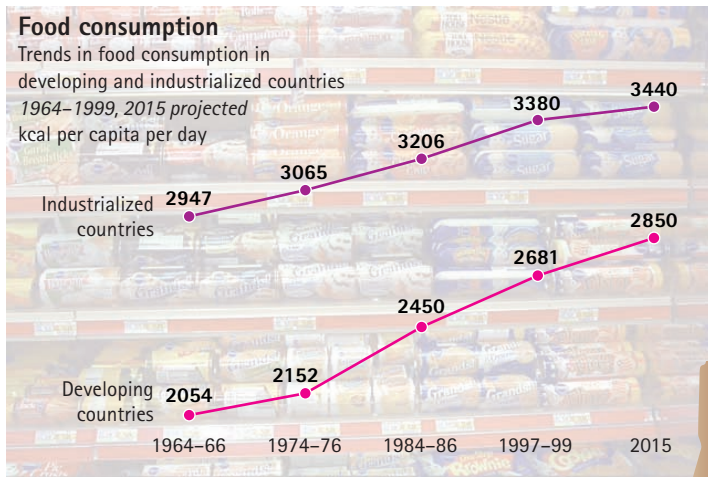
"Eat less at dinner and you will live to ninety-nine."  
Ancient Chinese proverb

Belt size, abdominal girth and waist-to-hip ratio are useful indicators of obesity. The Body Mass Index (BMI), a measure of weight in relation to height, is commonly used for classifying overweight and obesity.

The risks of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes tend to increase on a continuum with increasing BMI, but for practical purposes a person with a BMI of over 25 is considered overweight, while someone with a BMI of over 30 is obese. But one size does not fit all. In women, a BMI as low as 21 may be associated with the greatest protection from coronary heart disease death. The BMI for observed risk in different Asian populations varies from 22 to 25 kg/m<sup>2</sup>.

Availability of food, changes in the kind of food eaten, and decreased exercise are presenting humanity with one of its greatest challenges. Low fruit and vegetable intake accounts for about 20% of CVD worldwide. Obese smokers live 14 fewer years than nonsmokers of normal weight.

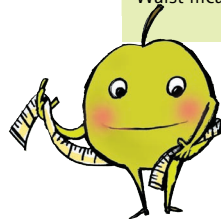
More than 60% of adults in the USA are overweight or obese. Triple-width coffins, capable of holding a 300 kg (700 lb) body, are in increasing demand. Worldwide, airlines are having to recalculate their passenger "payload" weight. There are 70 million overweight people in China. South Pacific populations used to be physically active and slim, but the region now has some of the world's highest rates of obesity.



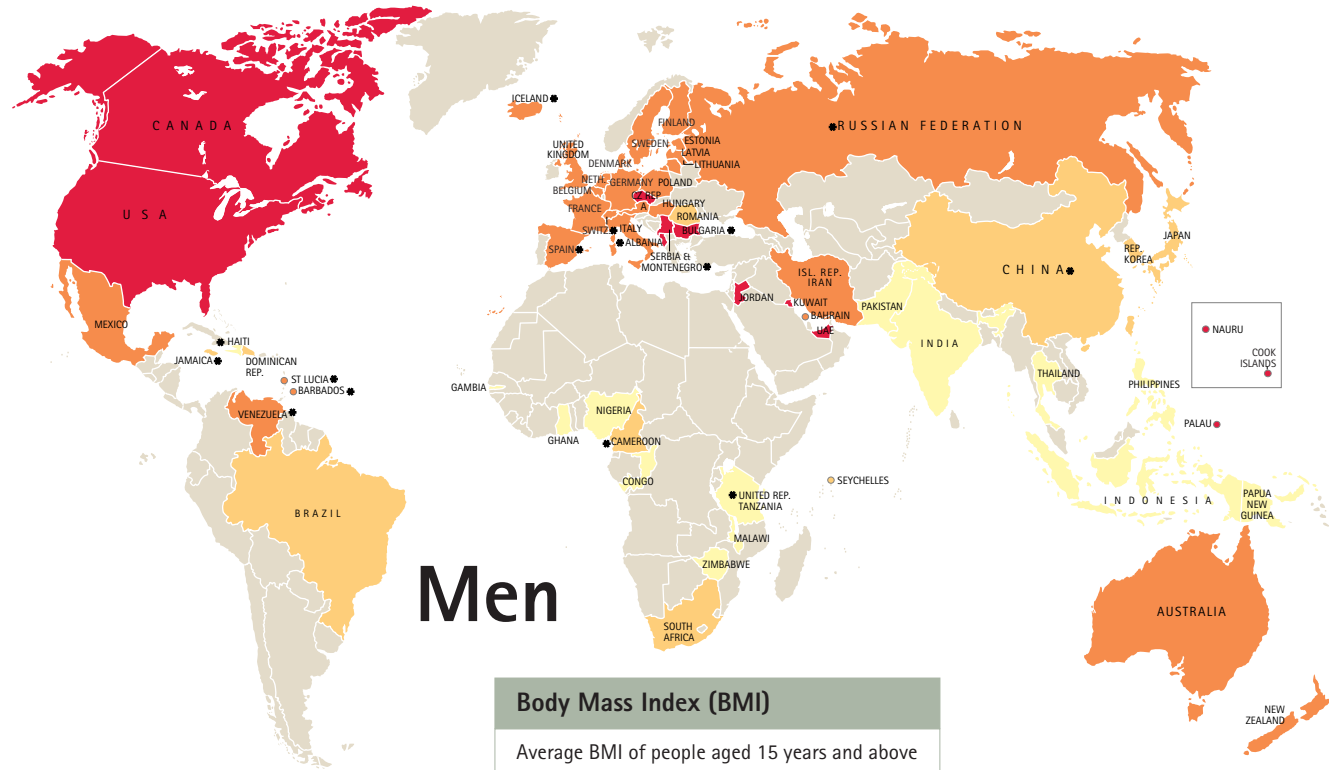
### Apple shape at higher risk of CVD than pear shape

Waist-to-hip ratio of 0.91 and above is associated with nearly threefold increased risk of coronary heart disease.

Increased CVD risk if:	Men	Women
Waist to hip ratio	more than 0.90	more than 0.85
Waist measurement	more than 101cm (40 inches)	more than 89cm (35 inches)



Cartoon characters used to promote the WeightWise campaign of the British Dietetic Association.

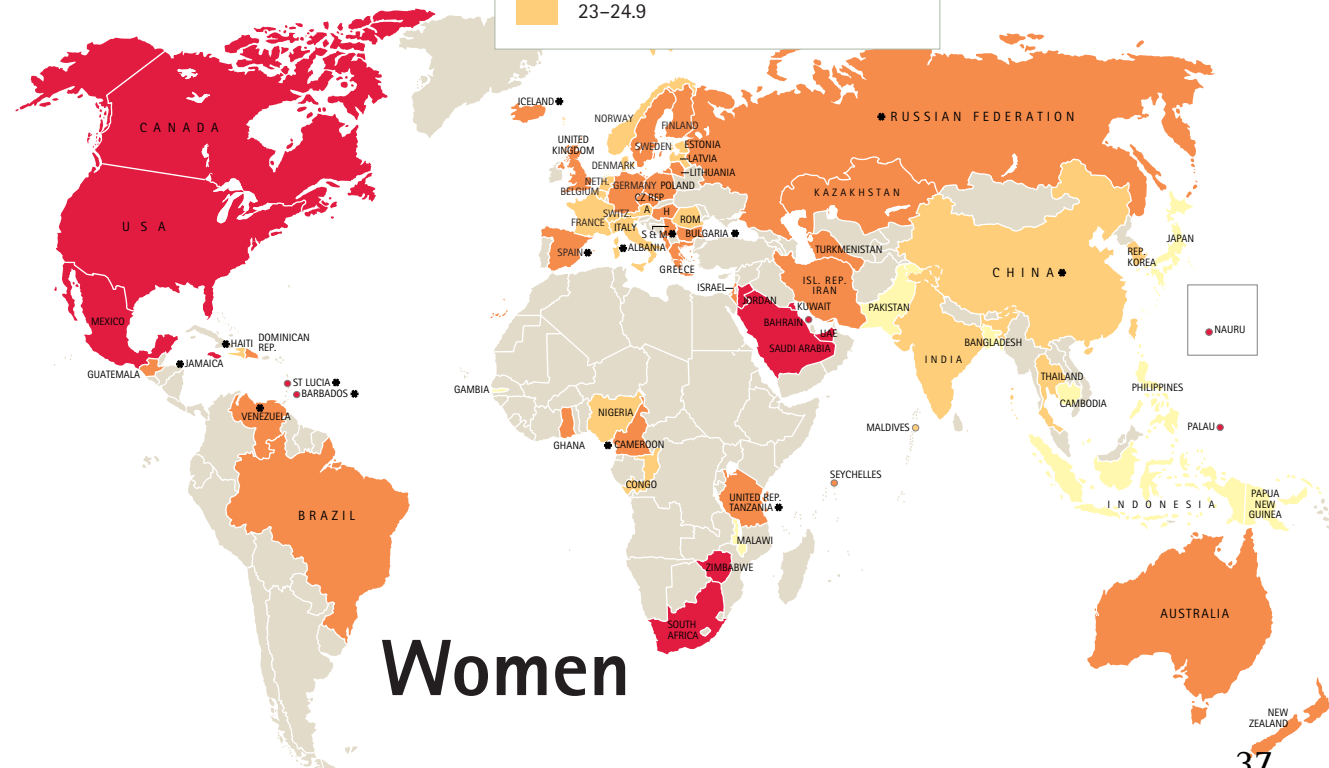


Men

**Body Mass Index (BMI)**

Average BMI of people aged 15 years and above estimated to 2005  
kg/m<sup>2</sup>  
\* data from urban populations only

27 and above	18-22.9
25-26.9	no data
23-24.9	



Women