



Achieving a healthy weight for me

What is a healthy weight?

A healthy weight is the weight at which your body can function best. It is specific to you and will lie within a range, rather than being a specific number.

Why is it important to be at a healthy weight?

When we are below a healthy weight, our bodies begin to shut off some important functions in order to keep us alive. This might result in issues with our heart and circulation, bone health, stomach digestion and hormones. Achieving a healthy weight is an important part of recovery because your body will be able to function well, and you will have more energy for the activities you enjoy.

How do I know if I am at a healthy weight?

Your GP or Accredited Practising Dietitian will be able to help you work out your healthy weight range. Some signs that you may be below a healthy weight include:

- losing your period or having irregular periods
- slowed growth (in children or adolescents)
- feeling cold a lot of the time
- having fine hair on your face and body
- feeling tired or unable to concentrate
- having dry, brittle hair and/or dry skin

If I have my period, does it mean I am at a healthy weight?

Not necessarily. Menstruating, or having your period, can be affected by many things and may not be present even at a healthy weight. Some people may also get their period despite being

below a healthy weight. After achieving a healthy weight, it can take some time (up to 12 months) before regular menstruation returns.

What if gaining weight makes me feel anxious?

This is understandable and part of the recovery journey. Seeking and accepting the support of family, friends and carers is important. Speaking to a mental health professional or your psychologist about strategies to reduce anxiety may also be helpful. Improving your weight is only one part of recovery and is not the only measure focussed on. You can ask to not know the number on the scales when you are weighed. Focussing on small, manageable goals (such as finishing each meal throughout the day or making sure to follow your meal plan, if you have one) may make it easier. It's okay to feel uncomfortable, aim to challenge these feelings and keep making progress.

I'm at a healthy weight, does this mean I'm recovered?

Achieving a healthy weight is an important step in recovering from an eating disorder. You may reach a healthy weight but still experience distressing thoughts about food and body image, as well as participate in behaviours relevant to your eating disorder. It will take time for these things to resolve, achieving a healthy weight is a great step forward in recovering from an eating disorder.

Looking for more info?

www.insideoutinstitute.org.au
www.nationaleatingdisorders.org
www.cedd.org.au