



# How Does My Weight Affect My Back Pain

**For every 5 pounds of excess weight you carry on your abdomen, an estimated 20 pounds of pressure is placed on your back muscles and spine!** Therefore, an important strategy for decreasing the stress on your back is maintaining a healthy weight.

An easy way to determine your desirable body weight is to use the following formula<sup>2</sup>:

- Women: 100 pounds for the first 5 feet of height, plus 5 pounds for each additional inch
- Men: 106 pounds for the first 5 feet of height, plus 6 pounds for each additional inch
- For a small body frame, 10% should be subtracted; for a large body frame, 10% should be added

## Tips

### for Achieving or Maintaining A Healthy Weight:

*(Remember, always consult with your physician before starting an exercise or weight loss program.)*

- Focus on weight management and fitness, not weight **loss**
- Improve your fitness level and remain active
- Aerobic activity increases muscle tissue, burns calories, and decreases the risk for early deterioration of the spine
- Gradual changes in eating habits encourage permanent lifestyle changes
- Eat a healthy diet of fruits, vegetables, grains, and low-fat foods.
- You don't have to stop eating your favorite foods, consider eating smaller portions

For additional weight management information or general health information, be sure to access [myuhc.com](http://myuhc.com).<sup>®</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Optum 2002

<sup>2</sup> A.D.A.M., Inc., Donna R. Cooper, MD, MPH, Department of Medicine, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA.

