

# HEALTHBEAT

A HEALTH NEWSLETTER FOR EMPLOYEES



## The Skinny on BMI

Chances are you have heard the term “BMI” used when describing your body. You may have also heard that BMI has something to do with this year’s North Carolina State Health Plan wellness initiative. But what EXACTLY is BMI? How is BMI calculated and what is my BMI? What does it have to do with the State Health Plan? Where can I find more resources?

### What is BMI?

BMI stands for Body Mass Index. The Center for Disease Control defines BMI: “Body Mass Index (BMI) is a number calculated from a person’s weight and height. BMI provides a reliable indicator of body fatness for most people and is used to screen for weight categories that may lead to health problems.”

### How is BMI Calculated and What is My BMI?

BMI is calculated by using the following formula:  
 $(\text{Weight in pounds} * 703) / (\text{Height in inches}^2)$

Once you have that number calculated, check the BMI chart to see which category your number falls in.

For example, let’s say Kelly is 5’5” and 160lbs. Her BMI calculation would go as follows:

$$(160 * 703) / (652) = 26.6$$

According to the BMI chart, at 5’5” and 160lbs., Kelly has a BMI of 26.6 and is considered overweight. There are also tons of BMI

calculators on the web which make it easy for you to routinely check your BMI without having to have a calculator and formula in hand. Simply go to one of the sites, type in your height and weight and the online BMI calculators will automatically crunch the numbers for you. Check out the Center for Disease Control for a quick and accurate BMI calculation.

### What Does BMI Have to do with the State Health Plan?

The North Carolina State Health Plan has a comprehensive member wellness initiative which aims to support healthy lifestyles and strives to keep members’ premiums and out-of-pocket expenses from increasing. The North Carolina State Health Plan website ([www.shpnc.org](http://www.shpnc.org)) states the following:

The Plan asks members to self-report tobacco use and height/weight for the calculation of Body Mass Index (BMI). Those members who do not use tobacco, or have a BMI less than 40, would be able to choose the PPO Standard 80/20 plan or the PPO Basic 70/30 plan. Tobacco users and members with a BMI 40 or higher would automatically be placed on the PPO Basic 70/30 plan.

The member wellness initiative includes all covered dependents. (The initiative does not apply to Medicare-primary members.) The tobacco cessation component will begin on July 1, 2010. The weight management program will begin on July 1, 2011. A member education program will outline all components well in advance of implementation.

### Where can I find more resources on BMI and the State Health Plan?

Pierce Group Benefits and the State Health Plan have put in place a number of resources to help you find information regarding BMI and the State Health Plan’s wellness initiative. You can check your HR InTouch site launched by Pierce Group for more information regarding BMI, smoking cessation, nutritional information and overall wellness. You can also check the Pierce Group website at [www.PierceGroupBenefits.com](http://www.PierceGroupBenefits.com) for the latest health and wellness information. The State Health Plan website at [www.shpnc.org](http://www.shpnc.org) also provides a wealth of information regarding health and wellness, as well as information pertaining to your health plan.

BMI	Weight Status
Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5 -24.9	Normal
25 - 29.9	Overweight
30 & Above	Obese

## February - The Month of Love (Loving Your Heart, That Is).

What's the first thing that comes to mind when you think about the month of February? Valentine's Day? And what's the first thing that comes to mind when you hear, "Valentine's Day"? Matters of the heart, right? Candy hearts, stuffed bears holding hearts, and heart-shaped necklaces. But while many of us focus on all the heart-shaped goodies, we tend to forget about our actual hearts—the ones beating in our chests, that is. Since 1963, February has appropriately been proclaimed American Heart Month.

According to the American Heart Association, in 2006 it was estimated that 81.1 million people in the United States had one or more forms of cardiovascular disease (CVD). To put that number into perspective, that's enough people to fill up an average sized NFL football stadium over 1,158 times! In that same year, CVD claimed 831,272 lives accounting for 34.3% or 1 out of every 2.9 deaths, with coronary heart disease (narrowing of coronary arteries due to fatty build ups of plaque) being the leading cause of those deaths.

Those numbers are scary and shocking, right? But if you are anything like me, CVD is the type of thing that happens to "other people," but not me. Well, you are right—it does happen to other people. But don't let it happen to you!

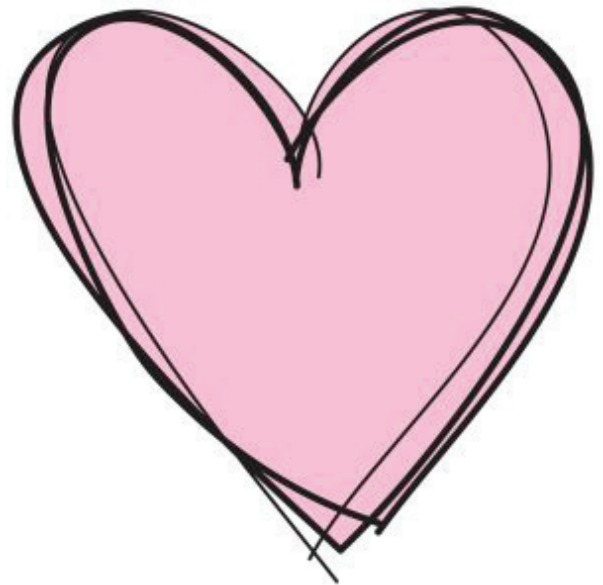
Thinking about how to improve your overall heart health may sometimes seem overwhelming. It doesn't have to be. Listed below are some simple things to incorporate into your daily routine that can help reduce your risk of CVD.

- Ride your bike for 20 minutes a day
- Go to bed an hour earlier
- Eat fish at least once a week
- Skip the soda and have orange juice instead
- Drink an 8oz. glass of water every two hours
- Use extra virgin olive oil and garlic in cooking
- Eat a high-fiber breakfast cereal at least four times a week
- Prioritize relaxation
- Drink two cups of green or black tea a day

You can also help reduce your risk of CVD by making these changes. Hold on to your hats – they may take some work to accomplish but can make a significant difference.

- Quit smoking
- Lower your cholesterol
- Exercise regularly
- Eat less saturated fats, and more protein and produce
- Avoid trans fats
- Consume alcohol only in moderation
- Take risk-reducing vitamins and supplements, particularly vitamin E, C and B6
- De-stress

Notice any commonality in all the points listed above? They don't specifically point to just a healthier heart, but to a healthier YOU! No matter which way you look at it, a healthier body and mind will lead to a healthier heart. Although making some of these changes can seem overwhelming, making small changes regularly is the best way to improve heart health and experience long-lasting positive effects. All those small steps gradually add up to greater and greater health benefits.



## Keeping Your New Year's Resolutions. Practical Tips for Practically Everyone.

As we begin 2011, many of us are kissing all those old bad habits from 2010 goodbye, declaring our new year's resolutions for 2011 and mustering up the will power to carry out those resolutions. Congratulations! You are off to a great start!

But whether you know it or not, a large number, if not the majority of us are doomed to fail at achieving those resolutions before we even begin! So, how can you make this time around more successful? The good news is that it might not be as hard as you think.

**Here are some tips to set you on the path to success:**



### 1. Set REALISTIC goals.

Let's be honest. Losing 50lbs. in two months or suddenly running 10 miles a day, seven days a week just isn't realistic! Instead, try to set up reasonable benchmarks along the way. Instead of making an oath to drop 50lbs in two months, strive for something more attainable like five or ten pounds.

### 2. Reward yourself.

We are our own worst critics and unfortunately, this mindset can be devastating to keeping your resolution. Reid Hester, director of research at Behavior Therapy Associates says, "Punishment is a poor motivator. It sets people up for failure. If all you do is punish yourself for failure, you won't stay motivated to change for very long." So if your resolution is to quit smoking, treat yourself to getting

your car detailed or house cleaned to get rid of that smoky smell.

### 3. Tell everyone you know.

Whether you tell your co-workers, your family and friends or the guy that sits next to you on the bus, share your resolutions with them. The more people you tell, the more people will be there to hold you accountable, especially if you fall behind.

### 4. Plan a time-frame.

January 1 not your thing? Don't sweat it! There's no law that says you can't enact your resolution on say, May 23rd at 2:47pm if you so choose. Already start your resolution for 2011? Try buying a calendar or diary so you can plan your actions for the next couple of days or weeks and decide how often to evaluate so you stay on track!

### 5. Don't give up!

Bear in mind that a slip-up is almost inevitable at some point, and it might be easy to let this become an excuse to give up. To keep this from happening, try to focus on your past achievements and don't be overly critical of yourself. Like anything else, learn from your actions and try to figure out what triggered your slip-up and how you can avoid it in the future.

Whether your goal is to fit into your skinny jeans again, drink less caffeine, or put out those cigarettes for good, it's no secret that making lasting changes is not a simple process. Now that you have read these tips, you are in a great position to make some real changes to positively impact your life and achieve your goals in 2011. So get started and good luck!

## Keep the Super Bowl, Super Light!

What do Packers, Steelers, Bears and Jets fans all have in common? Two things: One, they all hope their team wins the Super Bowl. And two, according to CBS News, they all eat about 3,000 calories on game day! So while your favorite team makes the numbers on the scoreboard go up on Super Bowl Sunday, keep the numbers (of calories that is) in your snack tray down! Try a few of these healthy option (but still delicious!) Super Bowl snacks.

### Healthy and Tasty Guacamole

Ingredients:

- 2 Avocados
- 1 Small Onion (minced)
- 1 Clove Garlic (Or minced garlic from a jar)
- 1 Tbsp. Lemon or Lime Juice (optional)

Directions: Cut open avocados and scoop them out. Discard skin and pits. Use a fork or mixer to blend the avocados until smooth. Next, add some minced onions and garlic to taste. Add a little lemon juice for an extra kick. Serve immediately with natural low-fat corn tortillas chips to keep the calorie count down. Enjoy!

Number of Servings: 12 (2Tbsp. per serving)

Calories: 64.8

Total Fat: 5.2g

### Healthy Quesadillas

Ingredients:

- 4 wheat tortillas
- 8 tbsp low fat cheese (preferably cheddar)
- 8 tbsp salsa
- 8 tbsp fat free refried beans or black beans
- 8 tbsp low fat sour cream

Directions:

- heat large skillet (med-high) with Pam cooking spray
- place on of the flour tortillas in the heated pan
- add 2tbsp. of each of the ingredients, except sour cream, to half of the tortilla
- fold the tortilla in half
- cook until cheese is melted and tortilla is cooked to your liking 2 to 5 minutes
- serve hot with sour cream

You can add different ingredients as you like: fresh cilantro, jalapeños, corn, peppers, hot sauce, or leave the beans off and add one tbsp of a lean meat.

Number of Servings: 4 (1 quesadilla per serving)

Calories per serving: 238.5

Total Fat: 8.3 g

