

The Meaning of Healthy Weights in British Columbia

The Meaning of Healthy Weights in British Columbia is intended to provide a consistent understanding of healthy weights for the purpose of developing policy and strategies for promoting healthy weights in British Columbia.

What is Healthy Weight?

A healthy weight is defined by a body composition that positively contributes to an individual's overall health, wellbeing and quality of life over their lifespan. Weight is one marker of health. A healthy weight is different for each individual.

Why is Healthy Weight Important?

Healthy weight, at all ages and stages of life, promotes and supports the physical, mental and social health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. Healthy weight reduces the risk and occurrence of and supports the management of weight related diseases and health problems.

How is Healthy Weight Supported?

Supporting healthy weight requires an integrated and comprehensive approach that includes supportive environments, health and social services and policies that address inequities and facilitate healthy eating, active living and mental wellbeing where people live, learn, work and play. Features

of this approach include: access to healthy food, opportunities for physical activity, and knowledge and skill development for healthy living. Healthy weight is supported by individuals, families and communities that hold beliefs, attitudes and values, and engage in behaviours that facilitate health and well-being. This approach acknowledges social, economic and cultural diversity, respects all body sizes and is free from weight-related bias, stigma and discrimination.

Who is Responsible for Healthy Weight?

All of society shares the individual and collective responsibility of supporting and fostering healthy weight. Action is necessary at the local, regional, national and global level. The collaboration and commitment of government at all levels, industry, non-government organizations (NGOs), education, research, communities, and the media, through programs, services, policies, practices and products built upon the values of health equity, diversity and autonomy, are pivotal to the promotion and maintenance of healthy weights.

Developed by the Meaning of Healthy Weights in BC Working Group in consultation with Ministry of Health and Health Authority representatives from the Healthy Eating Strategy Leadership Group (December 2012)