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# ***BMI as the New Vital Sign***

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# Why BMI should be considered a vital sign?

- BMI is a significant indicator of health and well-being
- The consideration of BMI as a vital sign was first put forward over a decade ago
- Protocols must be put in place to record BMI routinely and to take action when it is outside the normal range
- Promoting the routine calculation of BMI on initial assessment may encourage health-care professionals to become more aware of obesity and its impact on the patient and the health system

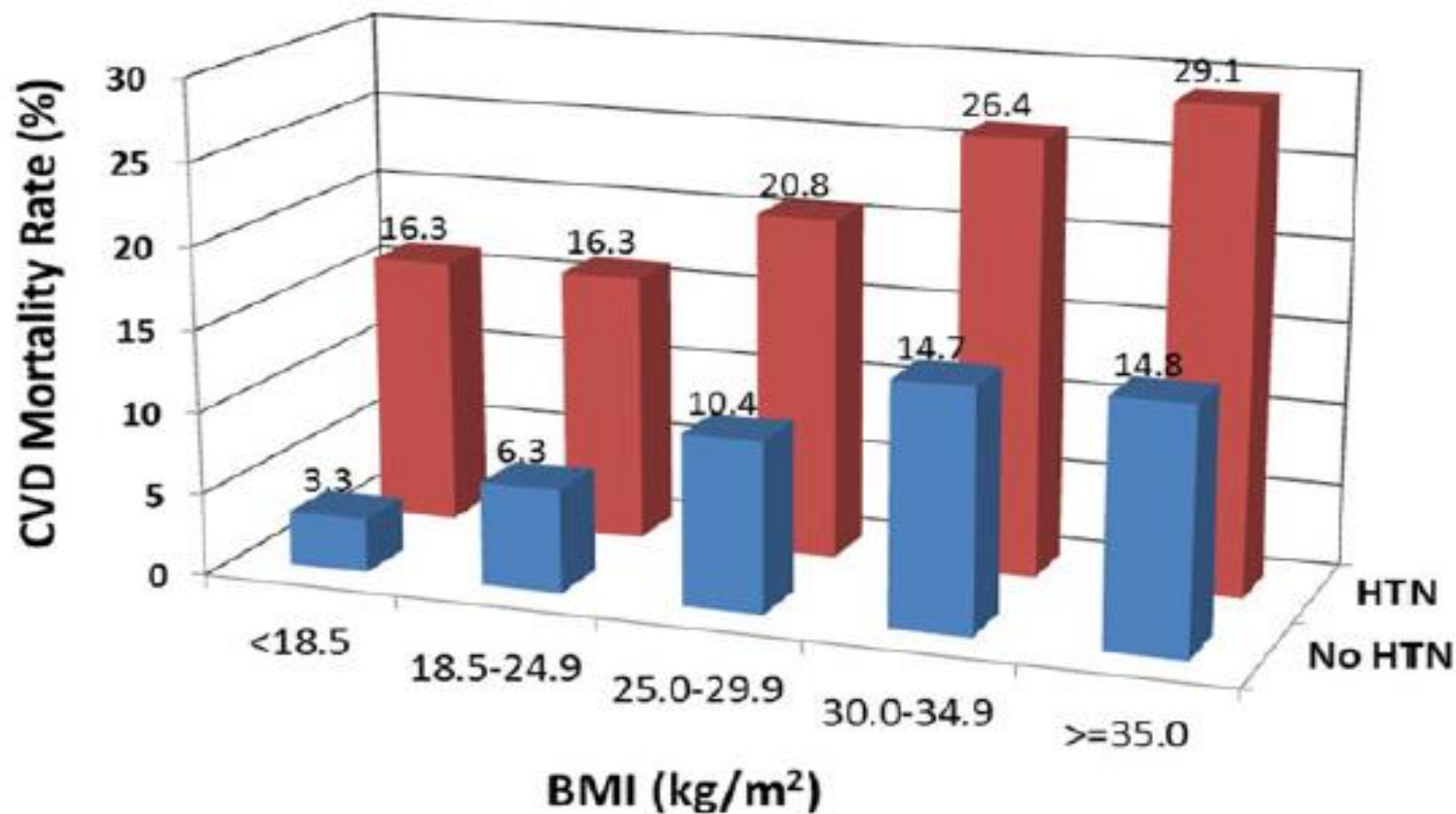
# BMI: A Vital Sign For Patients And Health Professionals

## Obesity:

- Great epidemic in our days
- Huge impact on mortality
- The Body Mass Index is an important parameter, even little used:
- **BMI = weight (kg) / height <sup>2</sup> (m)**

< 20 kg/m <sup>2</sup> :	Low weight
20 – 25 “	: Normal weight
26 – 30 “	: Overweight
> 30 “	: Obesity
> 40 “	: Morbid Obesity

- **Evidence**> Higher BMI: **Greater risk for comorbidities** such as **diabetes, hypertension, high blood cholesterol** and for asthma, arthritis, and poorer overall health status
- Chronic diseases with a significant proportion of morbidity and mortality worldwide, the **impact of the obesity epidemic has the potential to overwhelm health systems**



**FIGURE 2** Thirty-two year rates of death due to cardiovascular disease in participants of the Chicago Heart Association Detection Project in Industry cohort, stratified by baseline body mass index (BMI) and hypertension (HTN) status. CVD indicates cardiovascular disease. [Color figure can be viewed in the online issue, which is available at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](http://wileyonlinelibrary.com).]

# What dietary patterns work best?

*Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2022 (8th Ed.)*

- For Healthier Diet:
- Reduce: added sugars and saturated fats:  
<10% of calories per day  
Salt: <2300 mg/day (<1 teaspoon)
- Adopting a healthy eating pattern that adapts to a person's lifestyle (likes and preferences)
- Some recommended diets: Healthy American, Mediterranean, Vegetarian

## Healthy eating pattern: (According to Guidelines)

- Any type of vegetable: wide variety
  - Fruit, especially whole
  - Grains (50%: whole)
  - Fat-free or low-fat dairy: milk, yogurt, cheese and / or fortified soy beverages
  - Proteins (various sources): seafood, fish, lean meats and poultry, eggs, beans, peas, nuts, seeds, soy products
  - Oils
  - If alcohol is consumed (moderate).  
Women: 1 drink/day; Men: up to 2
- ***Physical exercises***

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# Artificial Sweeteners

- Non-caloric sweeteners have been defined as substances having the highest sweetness per gram relative to caloric sweeteners such as sucrose or corn syrup.
- When added in small amounts, they give little or no calories.

- The FDA has approved five artificial sweeteners:

- Acesulfame potassium (Sunett)
- Aspartame (NutraSweet or Equal)
- Sucralose (Splenda)
- D-Tagatose (Sugaree)
- Saccharin (Sweet 'N Low)



# Truth about artificial sweeteners

- Artificially sweetened beverages consumption was associated with a higher risk of stroke and dementia (Pase MP et al. Stroke, April 20, 2017)
- **The health benefits of *artificial sweeteners* are inconclusive, with research showing mixed findings.**
- . "But if you need to control your **blood sugar** and **caloric intake**, artificial sweeteners are a safe, effective way to do that." R. Kava, PhD, RD, Director of Nutrition, ACSH, 2002 WebMD, Inc.