



# Healthy Weight Month

## Message for Commanding Officers

American adults are battling weight issues at an alarming rate with nearly 70 percent considered overweight or obese since 2007.<sup>1</sup> The military population is waging a similar fight against excess body weight. According to the 2014 Fleet and Marine Corps Health Risk Assessment (FMCHRA) Annual Report, 64 percent of Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard service members who completed the assessment were classified as overweight or obese using self-reported criteria and the body mass index (BMI) standards set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).<sup>2</sup> The assessment also identified some of their leading health risks as a low daily intake of vegetables, low daily intake of fruits, and a high daily intake of high-fat foods.<sup>2</sup>

For Sailors and Marines, exceeding body composition assessment (BCA) standards can negatively affect one's career and compromise mission readiness. Exceeding BCA can decrease overall quality of life and can increase risk of health problems such as heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and some types of cancer.<sup>3</sup>

The start of a new year brings motivation to set new goals. Keep your command in top shape and make them stronger for the year to come by promoting tools and resources that contribute to healthy weight through healthy eating, an active lifestyle, and psychological and emotional well-being.

## What Can Leadership Do?

**Commanding officers can promote healthy body weight among their Sailors and Marines by:**

- Establishing a strong command policy on individual and unit-level physical training, and leading by example during command physical training.
- Work with your HRA administrator to have them pull a recent Commanding Officers Report for the FMCHRA to identify the unit's BMI distribution as a way to identify the types of positive healthy behavior change to promote.
- Encouraging Command Fitness Leaders to empower their command to take ownership of their health and wellness by demonstrating exercise programming and nutrition basics that can reinforce healthy weight.



- To help active duty personnel who failed or are at risk of failing their BCA, Command Fitness Leaders can refer Sailors to the [ShipShape Program](#), the Navy's official weight management program.
- Ensuring healthy snacks are readily available if food is offered at the Command.

**Leadership can also work with Health Promotion Coordinators and Command Fitness Leaders to:**

- Challenge Sailors and Marines to a [One Day at a Time: 31 Day Challenge for a Healthier Life](#), in which they participate in one activity each day to help them accomplish a larger goal to achieve or increase healthy behaviors.
- Increase awareness about [supplement safety](#) and the [health impacts of taking supplements](#).
- Help Sailors and Marines learn how to [build a healthy meal](#) and let them know about the [20 tips for healthy eating](#).
- Show Sailors and Marines how to [promote weight loss successfully](#) by understanding the barriers that affect behavior change.
- Encourage them to access a [wellness coach through Military OneSource](#).
- Direct them to the [weight management Web page](#) where they can learn [how a high BMI affects their health](#), [strategies for losing weight](#), [performance nutrition](#), and [stress eating](#).
- Visit NMCPHC's [Wounded, Ill, and Injured \(WII\) Web page](#) to [understand the impacts](#) of maintaining a healthy weight and [strategies](#) for [overcoming challenges](#) to achieve your goal weight.

## References

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Health Statistics. Health, United States, 2014: With Special Feature on Adults Aged 55-64.

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/obesity-overweight.htm>. Published 2015. Accessed October 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center EpiData Center Department. Fleet and Marine Corps Health Risk Assessment 2014. <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/Documents/health-promotion-wellness/general-tools-and-programs/HRA-2014-report-final.pdf>. Published May 2015. Accessed November 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity. The Health Effects of Overweight and Obesity. <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/effects/index.html>. Published 5 June 2015. Accessed November 2015.