

# How your weight changes over time can impact your health

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Researchers from SCHARR have conducted a [study](#) that sheds light on how changes in body mass index (BMI) can significantly affect our health as we grow older. Body mass index (BMI), a measure of body

weight relative to height, has long been associated with various health issues, including diabetes, cancer, and heart disease.

This comprehensive study, published in the journal *Obesity* and utilizing data from the English Longitudinal Study of Aging, uncovered four distinct BMI trajectories among adults over the age of 50: stable overweight, elevated BMI, increasing BMI, and decreasing BMI. Each trajectory represents a unique pattern of BMI change over time.

Surprisingly, the study found that these BMI trajectories had minimal impact on overall mortality rates, [cancer risk](#), or stroke risk. However, they were significantly linked to the risk of specific health conditions, such as diabetes, asthma, arthritis, and heart problems.

Lead author Dr. Laura Gray explained, "Results from this study show that heterogeneity in BMI trajectories is important and can explain significant differences in health outcomes. BMI trajectory has little association with all-cause mortality but has a significant and substantial association with diabetes."

This research challenges the traditional approach of using single BMI measurements to assess health risks, especially in older adults. Instead, it emphasizes the crucial importance of considering changes in BMI over time when evaluating [potential health risks](#).

These findings hold considerable implications for health care professionals, potentially enabling them to identify individuals at risk for negative [health outcomes](#) tied to BMI fluctuations as they age. Additionally, this research could inform more accurate and tailored cost-effectiveness analyses and economic evaluations related to obesity prevention and treatment.

*Note: This University of Sheffield news article was co-authored using the*

*AI tool ChatGPT.*

**More information:** Laura A. Gray et al, BMI trajectories, morbidity, and mortality in England: a two-step approach to estimating consequences of changes in BMI, *Obesity* (2022). [DOI: 10.1002/oby.23510](https://doi.org/10.1002/oby.23510)

Provided by University of Sheffield

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