

How to read your body-composition report

What each number means — and what it cannot tell you

GOALS

OBESITY & LIFESTYLE MEDICINE
GUELPH INTERNAL MEDICINE CLINIC

Your weight is one number covering several different tissues. This report takes it apart. Weight and waist are measured; everything else is **estimated** from how easily a very small electrical current passes through you — a good estimate, but an estimate.

Fat mass

ESTIMATED, IN POUNDS AND AS A SHARE OF YOUR WEIGHT

How much of your weight is fat tissue. Moves slowly — real change shows over months, not between visits.

Skeletal muscle mass

ESTIMATED, IN POUNDS AND AS A HEIGHT-ADJUSTED INDEX

The muscle you move with. This is the one the bathroom scale cannot give you, and the one worth watching while weight is coming off.

Energy expenditure

CALCULATED, IN CALORIES PER DAY

What your body spends at rest and across a day, calculated from your estimated muscle mass. A starting point for nutrition, not a target handed down.

Visceral fat

ESTIMATED, AS A VOLUME IN LITRES

An indicator for fat around the organs rather than under the skin. The softest number on the report: read the direction, not the figure.

Body water

ESTIMATED, TOTAL AND SPLIT INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CELLS

How much water you are carrying, and where. It explains most of what a scale does from one day to the next.

Waist circumference

MEASURED WITH A TAPE, BY HAND, AT THE SAME VISIT

Free, repeatable at home, and the only figure on this report you can check yourself between visits. It says nothing about muscle — that is what the rest is for.

One reading is a snapshot. The direction is the finding.

A single scan tells you where you are on one morning. What answers the question you actually have — is this working, and is what I am losing the thing I wanted to lose — is the line across several scans.

Two honest limits. A change smaller than roughly **1.5 to 2 kg** sits inside the method's own margin of error, so we will not tell you a story about it. And readings taken when your fluid balance is unusual are not comparable with the rest.

Before your next scan

1. In the morning if you can, before breakfast and before anything to drink.
2. Empty your bladder first.
3. Not straight from the gym — exercise beforehand shifts the reading more than anything else on this list.
4. No alcohol the day before.
5. The same time of day at every visit, so today can be compared with next time.

It estimates. It does not see inside you.

No image is taken. A very small electrical current passes through the body, the machine reads how different tissues slow and delay it, and a formula turns that into pounds of fat and muscle. It is a good estimate resting on a real measurement. It is still an estimate, and we will keep using that word.

A number from another machine is not the same number.

The formulas are specific to the equipment. Your figure here, set beside a figure from a gym scale, a home scale or another clinic, is not a comparison — the only one that means anything is you now against you later, on the same machine, prepared the same way.

It is not a diagnosis.

It can help confirm that a body is carrying excess fat. It cannot tell you whether that fat is affecting your health — the 2025 international commission on clinical obesity is explicit that this takes a second, clinical step. That step is your history, your examination and your bloodwork, all of which are covered by OHIP and none of which this replaces.

Not done if you have an electronic implant. A pacemaker, a defibrillator, any other electronic implant, or an active prosthesis. The same applies if you are connected to equipment such as an infusion pump or a heart or lung support device. This is the manufacturer's own instruction, and we follow it. **A conversation first if you are pregnant, or have an irregular heart rhythm.** Neither rules the scan out. Both are on the manufacturer's list of situations to discuss with your physician beforehand, and in pregnancy there is a second reason to be careful: the method assumes a steady balance of body water, and pregnancy changes that, so the result would not mean what it normally means.

Your appointments, your assessment and your treatment plan are covered by OHIP. Your first scan came with your first visit. Any after that are optional and uninsured — if you have no more, your care is exactly the same. Questions about anything on your report belong with your care team, not with this sheet.

1030 Gordon Street #202
Guelph, ON N1G 4X5
226-270-8618
goalsclinic.ca/body-composition