

KEYS TO WEIGHT LOSS SUCCESS: HEALTHY DIET, EXERCISE, AND BEHAVIORS

Losing just 7-10% of your body weight can make a meaningful difference in your health and has been shown to improve heart health, blood glucose, blood pressure, blood cholesterol, mobility, sleep apnea, heart health acid reflux, and many other chronic conditions. Making sensible changes that you can maintain over the long term is more effective than restrictive crash diets. Learning how to effectively lose weight and keep it off is like building any skill set -it takes time, patience, and a positive problem-solving approach.

HEALTHY NUTRITION AND ACTIVITY FOR WEIGHT LOSS:

→ Create an energy deficit

- **In order to lose weight, you must use more energy than you take in.** Calories are the measure of a food's energy content. The body uses calories to function and do activity.
- **Eat fewer calories. To reduce calories:**
 - Eat foods, especially high calorie foods, less often.
 - Eat smaller portions of foods, especially high calorie foods.
 - Substitute lower calorie options for higher calorie options.
- **Read labels to make calorie-controlled choices.** First, look at the "Serving Size". Ask yourself, "How many servings am I consuming"? (e.g., 1/2 serving, 1 serving, 2 servings, etc.) Your portion might be more or less than the serving. Next look at the "Calories" per serving. Together, the calories per serving and the number of servings you consume (your portion amount) determines the number of calories you actually eat.
- **Increase activity to use more calories:** The more activity you do the more calories you use. Safely increase your physical activity level. Aim for at least 150 min. (i.e. 30 min. X 5 days) of moderate physical activity (i.e. brisk walking) per week. Check with your doctor before increasing activity.

→ Build a healthy weight loss plate

- **Fill half your plate with non-starchy veggies.** Aim to include at least 1 cup in two meals and one snack daily. Especially for lunch & dinner try to fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables including broccoli, spinach, peppers, carrots, green beans, tomatoes, celery, chilies, greens, cabbage, and many others. Rich in vitamins, minerals, fiber, & water and low in calories, consuming plenty of non-starchy vegetables helps keep a calorie-controlled diet nutritious and filling.
- **Include a protein source at every meal.** Adequate protein helps to keep you feeling full longer and promote fat burning rather than breakdown of body proteins. Choose lean proteins including skinless poultry, fish & seafood, extra-lean meats, egg whites, non-fat/low fat cottage cheese & Greek yogurt, beans & meat substitutes, and whey & other unsweetened protein supplements. Aim to include at least 10 g of protein per meal.
- **Control carbohydrates & choose fiber rich choices.** Try to limit the carbohydrate portion of the meal such as bread, pasta, rice, and potatoes to no more than $\frac{1}{4}$ th of your plate. Choose whole-food, fiber-rich sources of carbohydrates such as brown rice, whole-grain pasta, whole wheat bread, and starchy vegetables such as potatoes, plantains, and corn.

→ Avoid extra fat

- Keep high-calorie fat intake in-check by preparing foods using methods that require little or no added oil such as steaming, baking, grilling, broiling, and roasting. Enliven foods with low calorie options such as broth, nonfat/low fat dressing, vinegar, lemon juice, chopped onion or garlic, and herbs and spices. Make sure proteins are lean by choosing low fat/nonfat dairy, trimming fat off of meat, and removing

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poultry skin.

→ **Eat foods prepared at home more often**

- Foods prepared in restaurants and fast-food venues are generally higher in fat and served in larger portions. When you prepare food at home, you are in control of what goes into your meals and how much is served.

→ **Take smaller portions, use smaller plates**

- Using smaller plates decreases the amount people eat. Practice portion control so that you have just enough to satisfy your hunger.

→ **Drink water instead of sweet high-calorie drinks including juice and drinks with added sugar**

- Sweetened drinks tend to be low in nutrients and less filling than solid foods. Instead opt for water, seltzer, coffee/tea, skim milk, and diet drinks. Drinking plenty of calorie-free fluids such as water can also help to curb hunger. Avoid alcohol as much as possible as it is high in calories and tends to prompt less healthy food decisions.

→ **Limit sugary foods**

- Skip high-calorie desserts and snacks. To satisfy your sweet tooth try moderate amounts of products sweetened with no-calorie sweeteners and whole fruits. Aim to have a food with added sugar or other caloric sweeteners no more than once per day and practice portion control.

HEALTHY BEHAVIORS FOR WEIGHT LOSS

Research indicates that adopting healthy self-monitoring behaviors such as planning meals & activity, journaling intake, weighing yourself regularly, and eating mindfully is key to long-term weight loss success.

→ **Plan ahead & follow a regular pattern**

- Aim to plan at least the day before what you will have for meals & snacks. Write down your plan. Plan 3 meals and 1-2 snacks. Follow a regular pattern to prevent getting too hungry and losing control.
- Reserve time for activity. Try to adopt a consistent pattern and plan ahead to accommodate your schedule.

→ **Journal intake & activity**

- The first step in changing your diet to reduce calories is to become aware of your intake. Recording intake is the single most important behavior to healthy weight management.
- Record everything you eat & drink as well as your activity in a handwritten journal or a digital tracker on your Smartphone or computer (try the free app/website: www.myfitnesspal.com). Be as complete as possible by including everything and be as accurate as possible by measuring & reading labels.

→ **Enjoy your food by eating slowly & mindfully**

- Eating slowly and with awareness helps to increase your satisfaction and sense of fullness and decrease your total intake. Tuning in to physical hunger and satiety allows you to distinguish between actual hunger and times when you feel like eating because of strong emotions or boredom.

→ **Weigh yourself**

- Weigh yourself weekly to monitor changes in your weight. If you find the weight is not going down, than you know you need to further decrease calories or increase activity.