

# Weight Management

Effective weight management involves behavior modification which is a lifelong commitment and includes at least two components:

1. **Healthy eating** in accordance with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, emphasizing a reduction in total calories, lowered fat consumption, and an increase in vegetables, fruits and whole grains.
2. Increased frequency of regular **physical activity** of at least moderate intensity.

## 1. Eating Healthy

### Caloric intake

Losing weight requires burning more calories than the body takes in, by either reducing caloric intake or increasing caloric expenditure, or preferably, both.

Estimated Calorie Requirements (in Kilocalories) for Each Gender and Age Group at Three Levels of Physical Activity				
Activity Level <sup>b, c, d</sup>				
Gender	Age (years)	Sedentary <sup>b</sup>	Moderately Active <sup>c</sup>	Active <sup>d</sup>
Child	2-3	1,000	1,000-1,400	1,000-1,400
Female	4-8	1,200	1,400-1,600	1,400-1,800
	9-13	1,600	1,600-2,000	1,800-2,200
	14-18	1,800	2,000	2,400
	19-30	2,000	2,000-2,200	2,400
	31-50	1,800	2,000	2,200
	51+	1,600	1,800	2,000-2,200
Male	4-8	1,400	1,400-1,600	1,600-2,000
	9-13	1,800	1,800-2,200	2,000-2,600
	14-18	2,200	2,400-2,800	2,800-3,200
	19-30	2,400	2,600-2,800	3,000
	31-50	2,200	2,400-2,600	2,800-3,000
	51+	2,000	2,200-2,400	2,400-2,800

Source: HHS/USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005

Sedentary = less than 30 minutes a day of moderate physical activity in addition to daily activities.

Moderately Active = at least 30 minutes up to 60 minutes a day of moderate physical activity in addition to daily activities.

Active = 60 or more minutes a day of moderate physical activity in addition to daily activities.

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### Healthy Food Choices

Individualized food plan according to 2005 USDA Dietary Guidelines:  
<http://www.mypyramid.gov/mypyramid/index.aspx>

Four key recommendations of the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for food groups to encourage are:

1. Consume a sufficient amount of fruits and vegetables while staying within energy needs. Two cups of fruit and 2-1/2 cups of vegetables per day are recommended for a reference 2,000-calorie intake, with higher or lower amounts depending on the calorie level.
2. Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables each day. Eat fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruit, rather than drinking fruit juice, for most of your fruit choices.

Select from all five vegetable subgroups several times a week. Examples of vegetables from these subgroups include:

- **DARK GREEN VEGETABLES** -- Broccoli, spinach, most greens such as spinach, collards, turnip greens, kale, beet and mustard greens, green leaf lettuce, and romaine lettuce
- **ORANGE VEGETABLES** -- Carrots, sweet potatoes, winter squash, pumpkin
- **LEGUMES (DRY BEANS)** -- Dry beans, chickpeas
- **STARCHY VEGETABLES** -- Corn, white potatoes, green peas
- **OTHER VEGETABLES** -- Tomatoes, cabbage, celery, cucumber, lettuce, onions, peppers, green beans, cauliflower, mushrooms, summer squash



3. Consume 3 or more one-ounce equivalents of whole-grain products per day, with the rest of the recommended grains coming from enriched or whole-grain products. In general, at least half the grains should come from whole grains. Examples of whole-grains commonly consumed in the United States include:

- whole wheat
- whole rye
- bulgur (cracked wheat)
- brown rice
- whole oats/oatmeal
- whole-grain barley
- millet
- tritacale
- whole-grain corn
- wild rice
- quinoa

4. Consume 3 cups per day of fat-free or low-fat milk or equivalent milk products. If you don't or can't consume milk, choose lactose-free milk products and/or calcium-fortified foods and beverages.

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For more information, visit: <http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/ftfeb05.htm>.

### Food log

By keeping track of food and drink consumption you will stay mindful of your eating habits. Do you eat when bored? Do you eat unhealthy foods when in a hurry? Are you eating something that seems nutritious and healthy, but really isn't? You can calculate calories consumed to determine weight loss/maintenance goals and assess progress. Keeping a food log allows you to be accountable and mindful of calories consumed and you will become aware of the nutrient value of the foods/drinks you are using.

An on-line calorie counter is available at <http://www.my-calorie-counter.com>. This site lets you count calories for free (extra features cost \$35/year).

### Portion Size

Another common problem leading to overeating is taking portions that are too big. Most of us overestimate the size of a healthy portion, especially when we eat at restaurants and want to get a "good value" for our money. Listed below are the recommended portion sizes for a variety of foods. How do your typical portions compare?

3 oz. meat: size of a deck of cards or bar of soap (*the recommended portion for a meal*)

- 8 oz. meat: size of a thin paperback book
- 3 oz. fish: size of a checkbook
- 1 oz. cheese: size of 4 dice
- Medium potato: size of a computer mouse
- 1/2 cup pasta: size of a tennis ball
- Average bagel: size of a hockey puck.
- 1 cup chopped raw vegetables or fruit: baseball size
- 1/4 cup dried fruit (raisins, apricots, mango): a small handful

For more information, visit

[http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED\\_3\\_2x\\_Portion\\_Control.asp](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED_3_2x_Portion_Control.asp)

## 2. Exercise

Exercise is an important piece of weight loss and overall health. For example, 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity above your normal daily routine reduces the risk of chronic disease in adulthood. To manage body weight and prevent gradual, unhealthy body weight gain in adulthood, increase your exercise to approximately 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity activity on most days of the week. To sustain weight loss, increase your exercise to 60

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- 90 minutes per day of moderate intensity physical activity while not exceeding caloric intake requirements.

Another way to track physical activity is to use a pedometer to keep track of the number of steps you take. For example, 2000-2500 average steps is approximately one mile, which equates to around 100 expended calories.

### 3. Simple Strategies to Manage Your Eating

How often have you over-eaten or eaten unhealthy foods due to eating effortlessly in an unaware and mindless manner? Have you ever noticed that when you're done eating, you feel sick because you ate too much? This happens when we do not pay attention to eating, typically because we are doing something else at the same time like watching television, talking with others, or working. If you increase your awareness—or *mindfulness*—of eating, however, you can reduce your caloric intake and not feel so sick. Mindfulness is a way of observing your experiences and being in touch with your actions, thoughts and feelings. Mindful eating teaches you to pay attention to your bodies' signals that you are full and about what foods to eat. The goal of mindful eating is to understand your hunger and your body and mind's reaction to food and the process of eating. Try this activity:

#### Mindful eating

To start, move through the meal slowly. Take your time performing every action and notice what your experience is as you go through it. When you lift a fork or cut your meat, note what that is like for you. As you place a bite of food in your mouth and chew it, place your fork on the table and think about the flavors and the texture of the food. Is it enjoyable or repulsive? Don't get hung up in judging it. Just notice it. Do you find that particular thoughts or feelings come up during the course of the meal? If so, simply note those as well.

For more information about mindful eating consider reading these books:

1. Albers, S. (2003). *Eating Mindfully*. Oakland: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.
2. Hayes, S.C. (2005). *Get Out of Your Mind and Into Your Life*. Oakland: New Harbinger Publications.

### 4. Developing Weight Goals

Setting SMART goals for your weight loss is the first, and most important, step for managing your weight. Good goals have several qualities:

- **Specific:** Goals should not be too general or vague, since this makes it hard for us to know when we have accomplished them. For example, "I want to lose 20 pounds" is a better goal than "I want to lose weight."

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- **Measurable:** Goals should be set in a way that can easily and meaningfully measured. For example, “I want to look better” is not easily measured, but “I want a 34-inch waist” is easily measured.
- **Attainable:** Goals should be something you are motivated to achieve. For example, if improving your PT score is more important to you than your overall weight, then your goal should not be to lose weight.
- **Realistic:** Goals should be something you are able to accomplish. For example, setting a goal to run a marathon next month when you struggle to run 2 miles now is not a realistic goal.
- **Timely:** Goals should have a time frame built into them to hold you accountable. You’re more likely to work towards a goal if you give yourself a deadline.

### Body Mass Index (BMI) & Waist Size

BMI uses a mathematical formula that takes into account both a person's height and weight. BMI equals a person's weight in kilograms divided by height in meters squared. ( $BMI = \text{kg}/\text{m}^2$ ). It is the measurement of choice for many physicians and researchers studying obesity, because it is a more accurate indicator of overall health than just weight alone. Setting a BMI goal, instead of simply a weight loss goal, is a better weight management strategy for many people, especially those with medical conditions such as diabetes, COPD, heart diseases, hypertension, and more. To calculate your BMI, visit this website: <http://www.consumer.gov/weightloss/bmi.htm>.

Risk of Associated Disease According to BMI and Waist Size			
BMI		Waist less than or equal to 40 in. (men) or 35 in. (women)	Waist greater than 40 in. (men) or 35 in. (women)
18.5 or less	Underweight	--	N/A
18.5 - 24.9	Normal	--	N/A
25.0 - 29.9	Overweight	Increased	High
30.0 - 34.9	Obese	High	Very High
35.0 - 39.9	Obese	Very High	Very High
40 or greater	Extremely Obese	Extremely High	Extremely High

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Setting a SMART Weight Management Goal	
<b>Specific:</b> Where will you do it? With whom will you do it? How often will you do it?	
<b>Measureable:</b> How much? How many?	
<b>Attainable:</b> What is most important to you? What do you hope to accomplish?	
<b>Realistic:</b> Are you able to do it? What can you do right now? How easy will this be to maintain?	
<b>Timely:</b> When do you want to accomplish this? Do you have a deadline?	

Now that you have considered the necessary components for a SMART goal, write down your weight management goal below:

### Other tips for accomplishing this goal:

1. Hang this goal up where you can see it regularly so you can remind yourself what you're working towards.
2. Tell others about it. Ask them to help you stay accountable and support you.
3. Ask your doctor for advice or tips on reaching this goal.
4. Try this goal out for two weeks. At the end of two weeks, see if it's a goal that will work for you. If not, change it so it will work better.
5. Once you have accomplished this goal, set another SMART goal right away.
6. Remember to pace yourself. Change will not happen all at once, but will slowly build up over time. Be patient.