Small Changes Can Help You Lose Weight

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How to Lose Weight

Being overweight or obese can lead to many health problems, including diabetes, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, arthritis and even cancer. The good news is that losing even a few pounds can cut these risks.

Use more calories than you take in.
- The number of calories a person needs depends on age, gender and activity level. Most adults need 2,000 or fewer calories each day.
- If you take in more calories than you use, you will gain weight over time.
- If you use more calories than you take in, you will lose weight over time.
- To find out what you need, go to myplate.gov.

Do it for life.
- To lose weight and keep it off, make small changes you can stick with long term.

1. Take your time.
   - Aim to lose about 1 to 2 pounds a week. It’s safer to lose weight slowly.
   - Don’t be tempted by quick weight-loss fixes. They don’t usually work for long, and some are dangerous.

2. Pay attention to portion size.
   - Never eat out of the bag or box, or drink straight from the bottle. Always put food on a plate and pour your drink into a glass.
   - Don’t eat in front of the TV or computer. You’re more likely to overeat if your attention is on something else.
   - Try to eat in one place, preferably at the table.

3. Stay away from sugary drinks.
   - One 20-ounce sugary drink has about 250 empty calories (no nutritional value).
   - One less sugary drink a day can result in a 10-lb. weight loss per year.
   - Drink water, unsweetened tea or low-fat milk.

4. Prepare more meals at home.
   - It’s easier to control what you eat when you prepare your own food.
   - Home-cooked meals are usually more nutritious and less expensive.
   - Keep it interesting; try new, healthy foods – for example, fruits, vegetables or whole grains you’ve never tried.
   - Check the labels on packaged foods, especially serving size and calories per serving. Remember, most adults need 2,000 or fewer calories a day.

5. Choose carefully when eating out.
   - Some restaurant entrees and fast-food meals have more than 1,500 calories – almost as many calories as you should have for the whole day!
   - When you do eat out, watch out for large portions. Share a main course with a friend, or take half home.
   - Order a small size whenever you can.
   - Choose healthier items, like salad (but ask for dressing on the side).

6. Eat more fruits and vegetables.
   - Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables.
   - They help keep you healthy – and fill you up on very few calories.

7. Feel full on fewer calories.
   - Make smarter choices. For the same calories, you can eat 8 to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables for one fast-food taco salad.
   - Choose high-fiber foods: fruits, vegetables, beans, lentils, whole-grain cereals, breads and pasta.
   - Have a broth-based soup or green salad at the start of a meal.
   - Eat slowly. It takes about 20 minutes to start feeling full. People who eat too fast often eat too many calories.

8. Choose healthier snacks.
   - Snack on fresh fruits and vegetables instead of candy, cookies or chips.

9. Don’t skip breakfast.
   - People who eat breakfast are more likely to be at a healthy weight.
   - Skipping meals can make you hungrier and more likely to overeat.

10. Get moving.
    - Physical activity improves mood and health – even if you don’t lose weight.
    - Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity 5 days a week, such as brisk walking or biking.
    - Just walking burns calories, improves heart health and strengthens muscles.
    - You don’t have to join a gym or buy expensive equipment. Make NYC your gym!
    - Get off the bus or subway one stop early and walk the rest of the way.
    - Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
    - For free or low-cost fitness activities near you, visit BeFitNYC.org.

First Printing: May/June 2007 - Revised/Reprinted: 04/09, 11/09, 1/12, 10/13

How to Lose Weight Volume 10 – Number 8

10 Weight-Loss Tips That Really Work

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