



Health & Wellness Institute ®

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Weight Management

There are lots of reasons for people who are overweight or obese to lose weight. To be healthier. To look better. To feel better. To have more energy.

Maintaining a healthy weight is a constant struggle for many people. We are bombarded every day with promises for that supplement or diet that will finally work and keep the weight off. Unfortunately losing weight and maintaining a healthy weight comes down to a simple equation of balancing calories in with calories out. There are a few health conditions that make losing weight more difficult and a few supplements that slightly increase your rate of weight loss, but for the most part, it is about eating less and moving more. There are some people who have unusually fast metabolisms that can seemingly eat whatever they want without gaining weight, but for most of us, if we are really honest about what we put in our mouths, we carry extra weight because we eat too much. I know this isn't a popular view; everyone wants to hear that there is a magic bullet that will "cure obesity". The magic bullet is learning healthy eating habits and incorporating them into a healthier lifestyle, and then you really can stop dieting.

No matter what the reason, successful weight loss and healthy weight management depend on sensible goals and expectations. If you set sensible goals for yourself, chances are you'll be more likely to meet them and have a better chance of keeping the weight off. In fact, losing even five to 10 percent of your weight is the kind of goal that can help improve your health.

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, in cooperation with the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, released the first Federal guidelines on the identification, evaluation, and treatment of overweight and obesity. In 1999, almost 108 million adults in the United States were overweight or obese. Obesity and overweight substantially increase the risk of morbidity from hypertension; hyperlipidemia; type 2

diabetes; coronary heart disease; stroke; gallbladder disease; osteoarthritis; sleep apnea and respiratory problems; and endometrial, breast, prostate, and colon cancers. Higher body weights are also associated with increases in all-cause mortality.

What is a Healthy Weight?

A healthy weight varies from person to person, depending on age, genetics, height, bone size, and muscle mass. Calculating your body mass index (BMI), is one way of determining if your weight is in a healthy range, this looks at an approximate percent of body weight that is fat. The basal metabolic rate (BMR) is another estimation that determines how many calories you are burning when at rest, this is helpful to determine how many calories you need to eat to maintain or lose weight.

Calculate your BMI: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/index.htm>

Calculate your BMR: <http://www.internetfitness.com/calculators/bmr.htm>

Dieting

There are countless diet programs out there, and more coming out every day. Most people have tried one or another at some point in their life. Whether it's low calorie, low fat, low carbohydrate, no white foods, most programs revolve around good foods and bad foods. I would encourage you to try to stop thinking of food in these terms. There are definitely foods that are beneficial for health and some that are not, but putting food in an "off limits" category just makes it all the more enticing. Instead try to remember that balance is the key to eating right. You can have all foods, just in the appropriate amounts and relationship to other foods. The problem with most diets is that they are too restrictive and lay out rules that the average person can't follow for more than a few days or weeks, hence the high failure rate. A new goal to aim for is finding a life long way of eating that balances nutritious food that tastes good and nurtures you, with room for the occasional treat just for fun. After all, food is a source of pleasure; it doesn't make sense to take all the enjoyment out of eating!

Guidelines for Healthy Eating

Eating healthy doesn't have to be difficult or restrictive. Focus on what foods you need to get your basic nutritional requirements and make an effort to incorporate these into your diet on a regular basis in a way that fits your life. Often some simple changes can make huge differences.

- Eat 5-9 servings of fruit and vegetables/day. Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables each day. In particular, try to select from all five vegetable subgroups (dark green, orange, legumes, starchy vegetables, and other vegetables) several times a week.
- Consume 3 or more ounce-equivalents of whole-grain products per day, this is getting easier now with more and more whole grain options in breads, crackers, pasta, cereals.
- Consume 3 cups per day of fat-free or low-fat milk or equivalent milk products.

- Keep total fat intake between 20 to 35 percent of calories, with most fats coming from sources of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fatty acids, such as fish, nuts, and vegetable oils.
- When selecting and preparing meat, poultry, dry beans, and milk or milk products, make choices that are lean, low-fat, or fat-free.
- Limit intake of fats and oils high in saturated and/or *trans* fatty acids, from sources such as red meat, full fat cheese and other dairy products, fried foods, prepared snack foods
- Choose fiber-rich fruits, vegetables, and whole grains often.
- Keep sweets to a minimum
- Drink 60-70 oz of water/day
- Avoid sugary drinks such as sodas, coffee drinks and large quantities of fruit juice

Changing the way you eat

Losing weight and maintaining a healthy weight is often more about how you eat than what you eat. Americans in particular have some horrible, but common, eating habits that contribute hugely to our obesity problem. Eating while watching TV or reading, eating while driving, eating too fast and eating disproportionately large meals. There are some habits that contribute to excessive calorie intake. This is a consequence of our go-go-go society. Many people eat lunch at their desk, or while commuting from place to place. In other societies, people prioritize sitting down and enjoying a meal. This can make a significant difference in how much you eat. Eating while distracted results in eating a lot more than you would if you were paying attention, not to mention you enjoy your food much more when you are focusing on it. Many people would find that changing only their eating habits without even changing what they are eating would result in a calorie deficit and subsequent weight loss. Try the following tips for a couple weeks and see what you find:

1. Sit down in a quiet place with no distractions to eat all meals, even snacks. (No TV, no reading, no computer work)
2. No eating while driving.
3. Slow down, cut small bites and put your fork down between each bite. Savor your food.
4. Stop when you are full, regardless of whether or not your plate is empty.

Portion control

Eating smaller portions of food is one of the easiest ways to cut back on calories—but it can also be one of the most challenging, with the current trend of super-sizing. Huge portions, all-you-can-eat buffets, and extra-large "single servings" of chips, candy bars, and other snack foods can all contribute to overeating.

How do you know a reasonable portion of food when you see it? Visualize the objects mentioned below when eating out, planning a meal, or grabbing a snack. For

example, the amount of meat recommended as part of a healthful meal is 3-4 ounces—and it will look to be the same size as a deck of cards.

The Look of Normal Portion Sizes

- 3 oz. meat: size of a deck of cards or bar of soap—the recommended portion for a meal
- 3 oz. fish: size of a checkbook
- 1 oz. cheese: size of 4 dice
- Medium potato: size of a computer mouse
- 2 Tbs. peanut butter: size of a ping pong ball
- 1/2 cup pasta: size of a tennis ball
- Average bagel: size of a hockey puck

To eat smaller portions try the following ideas:

When eating out

- Choose a regular or kid size hamburger at your favorite fast food stop instead of the larger burger, and save about 150 calories.
- Have the small fries instead of the super-sized and save about 300 calories.
- Share an entrée with a friend when you go to a restaurant.
- Ask for half your meal to be packed for you and eat it for lunch the next day.

At home

- Don't "eat from the bag." When snacking, place a few chips, crackers or cookies in a bowl to help prevent overeating.
- Buy single portions of snack foods so you're not tempted by the whole bag or box.
- Like butter and sour cream on your baked potato? Mayonnaise and cheese on your sandwich? Cream cheese on your bagel? Use half the amount you usually do—and save even more calories by using lower-fat varieties.

Blood sugar control

One very important concept in healthy weight management is stable blood sugar. What does a stable blood sugar level mean and how is it important in a healthy weight loss program?

When you consume carbohydrates, your body experiences a spike in blood sugar levels due to a rise in glucose in your bloodstream. In response to this rise in glucose levels, the pancreas releases the hormone, insulin. Insulin is a hormone that's absolutely essential

for getting amino acids into the muscles for growth and getting carbohydrates into the muscles where they're needed for energy.

However, when there's a large blood sugar spike, your body tends to "overreact" and produce too much insulin. The insulin quickly clears the glucose from the bloodstream, leading to a sharp drop in blood sugar known as hypoglycemia. Low blood sugar is accompanied by cravings, hunger, weakness, mood swings and decreased energy. The hunger and cravings tend to cause the sugar consumption to perpetuate itself, resulting in a vicious cycle of ups and downs in energy throughout the day.

When excessive amounts of carbohydrates are ingested, particularly high glycemic (sugar content) simple carbohydrates, insulin converts the excess glucose in the blood into triglycerides (blood fat) that are then stored in the fat cells.

So, how do you eat in a way that controls your blood sugar? The answer is found in two easy steps:

1. Choose low to moderate glycemic index carbohydrates. The natural simple carbohydrates are "healthy," but ALL simple carbohydrates should be used in moderation during fat-reducing programs. When we talk about simple carbohydrates, we're often referring to refined sugar and white flour products – these are the "bad carbohydrates." But not all simple carbohydrates are bad. Some simple carbohydrates occur in nature. These "natural sugars" include fructose (found in fruit) and lactose (found in dairy products). Natural sugars are fine when eaten in moderation.
2. Combine these carbohydrates with a protein or essential oil/fat. You can manage your blood sugar and insulin levels by choosing fewer simple carbohydrates, more complex carbohydrates, eating fiber and having your carbohydrates with lean proteins approximately every three hours. Lean protein and essential fats slows the release of glucose into the blood stream thereby reducing the release of large amount of insulin.

The combination and balance of a protein and carbohydrate trigger the release of another potent hormone, glucagon. Glucagon, like insulin, maintains a healthy blood sugar balance. However, unlike insulin, glucagon promotes fat burning and mobilization of fat molecules.

Advantages to maintaining a stable blood sugar level:

1. Promotes fat loss
2. Consistent energy levels
3. Controls hunger cravings
4. Reduces risk for diabetes

Excessive sugar and insulin can directly affect the strength of your immune and cardiovascular system. For healthy weight loss and to maintain and even increase your biological age, it is important to maintain stability in your blood sugar level.

Exercise

No matter when you start, exercise improves health. Even people who start exercising later in life appear to gain many of the same health benefits as people who've exercised their whole lives, according to research at Stanford University School of Medicine.

Physical activity throughout life can help protect against some cancers. For breast and prostate cancer, it may help by regulating hormone levels. For colon cancer, physical activity speeds up the digestive process, shortening the exposure of the bowel lining to harmful substances. Exercise also helps reduce cancer risk by helping people maintain a healthy weight. In addition to protecting against cancer, exercise improves blood sugar regulation, lowering risk for diabetes, improves cardiac function and raises protective cholesterol, lowering risk for cardiovascular diseases and improves blood flow throughout the body, lowering risk for stroke and blood clots. Exercise also helps the body deal with stress, lowering blood pressure and anxiety.

How Much Activity Should You Be Doing?

- If you haven't been active, you should start with moderate activities and gradually increase the duration, frequency, and intensity as you become more fit. Work your way up to 30 minutes or more five or more days a week.
- If you are active but want to do more, increase the intensity, duration, or frequency of what you currently do. Moderate to vigorous activity for 45 minutes or more five or more days a week will increase your health benefits.
- If you are active and want to maintain your current level of fitness, try adding new activities to your routine to use different muscles and keep your interest.

Staying Motivated

Be specific and choose variety. Rather than having general goals like "getting in shape" or "exercising more," choose concrete goals such as walking 30 minutes on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and doing stretching exercises five minutes each morning. The more variety you have, the more likely you will continue. A well-rounded exercise program that includes aerobic exercise, strength training using weights, and flexibility exercises - even when performed regularly in small increments - is key, according to the American College of Sports Medicine.

Incorporate fitness into your lifestyle. Begin to see exercise as an everyday opportunity. For example, use the stairs instead of the elevator, walk during lunch, or bike to work. Combine fitness with your family chores and activities, such as raking leaves or gardening.

Motivate yourself. Try visualization techniques to help your motivation. Imagine yourself being in shape and how it feels. Create a vision of yourself looking fit. Rather

than focusing on feeling out of shape, picture yourself feeling energized after your workout. Also, reward yourself when you meet each of your goals.

Get a support system. Build a support system of family, friends, co-workers, and/or neighbors. They can help encourage you when your motivation is low. You can also exercise with someone else. Try to find a buddy who shares similar fitness interests. Many shopping malls have mall-walker programs where you can meet others.

Expect setbacks and prepare for obstacles. Things like time, illness, or bad weather may occasionally get in the way. Disruptions are inevitable. Accept them and move on. If you go off your program, you can always adapt and resume. Some exercise is always better than none at all.

Food Allergies

Researchers believe that hidden toxic reactions to everyday foods can contribute to weight problems in several different ways. First, they can cause water retention and water weight gain. In virtually all patients tested, partially digested food compounds pass through a compromised intestinal lining into the bloodstream and eventually travel to tissues, where they cause irritation and inflammation. The body tries to reduce this irritation by retaining water, which dilutes the concentration of the offending material. As long as you keep eating foods causing these toxic reactions, you will continue to hold on to water weight.

There is also evidence that food sensitivities can cause strong cravings and binge eating as well. One study found that partially digested compounds in common food allergens act similarly to morphine-like opioid drugs (Lancet, Oct 27, 1979). Eating the wrong food can actually produce a temporary "high," but when the feeling wears off, you crave the same food in order to get another euphoric "fix."

Identifying and eliminating a few foods from your diet can conceivably offer many benefits: alleviate bloating and water retention, help overcome food cravings and addictions, and boost metabolism and fat-burning lipolysis. Are foods toxic to your particular system making you fat? A toxic reaction to an everyday food could be key to your weight problem if...

- You retain lots of water.
- You exercise, diet and still can't lose weight.
- You lose weight and can't lose past a certain point.
- You have food cravings and engage in binge eating.

Food allergies/sensitivities can be identified in a couple ways, either through a blood test or through an elimination/reintroduction program. Talk to your physician to determine the best route for you.

Supplements

As stated before, there are no magic pills that will make you lose weight. There are, however, some nutritional and herbal supplements that can help your body achieve a healthy weight, in concordance with wholesome diet and exercise program. Talk to your physician for a personalized assessment and treatment plan.

- **CLA (conjugated linoleic acid)**
 - CLA is a naturally occurring trans isomer of linoleic acid, which may benefit body composition and support weight control. Several animal studies explore possible mechanisms of CLA, including the ability to maintain healthy fat deposition, promote lipolysis in adipocytes, moderate energy intake, and maintain healthy energy expenditure and metabolic rate.
- **L-Carnitine**
 - L-Carnitine is an amino acid found abundantly in skeletal and heart muscle. It functions primarily to support fat utilization, and also acts as a carrier of fatty acids into the mitochondria, where they are oxidized and converted to energy. L-
- **Guggul**
 - Guggul contains guggulsterones, compounds that maintain healthy lipid metabolism. Additional proposed mechanisms for the lipid metabolizing potential of guggul include supporting liver enzyme and cellular membrane function, promoting receptor function, enhancing bile acid excretion, and promoting thyroid function.
- **Fenugreek**
 - Studies suggest that fenugreek seeds help promote healthy glycemic control and post-prandial glucose metabolism. Fenugreek also promotes feelings of satiety and may support healthy triglyceride levels.
- **Gymnema Sylvestre**
 - Studies reveal the ability of *Gymnema sylvestre* to support enzyme activity for glucose utilization and to promote healthy glucose uptake into the intestines. Furthermore, this extract has the potential to support healthy lipid and triglyceride metabolism.
- **Chromium**
 - Chromium is important for fat metabolism, enzyme activation, and glucose support. It promotes healthy lipid and carbohydrate utilization.
- **Taurine**
 - Taurine promotes healthy glucose, lipid and triglyceride metabolism.
- **Biotin**
 - Biotin, a water-soluble B vitamin, facilitates protein, fat and carbohydrate metabolism by acting as a coenzyme for numerous metabolic reactions.

Lab Work

As part of a comprehensive wellness visit, your doctor will most likely recommend some blood work to evaluate your risk for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, thyroid disorders, blood sugar disorders and hormone imbalances.

- Chemistry Panel- evaluates organ function and fasting blood glucose levels
- Lipid Panel- determines total cholesterol and triglycerides as well as HDL and LDL cholesterol levels
- Thyroid tests- evaluates proficiency of thyroid function
- HgbA1C- tests
- CRP- inflammatory marker that predicts risk for cardiovascular disease, this can be elevated as a result of obesity
- Progesterone, estrogen, testosterone, FSH, LH- to evaluate hormone balance
- Cortisol- stress marker, elevation can cause fatigue and weight gain
- DHEA- evaluates body stress levels and hormone function