



Living Well

Your Guide • Your Journey

Provided by:





WELCOME



Thank you for your interest in our health and wellness guide. Managing your weight can be difficult. This guide was made with that in mind. It is meant to be a helpful tool to use during your health journey.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE:



OAC's Educational Resources
ObesityAction.org/library



Obesity Care Providers Locator
ObesityCareProviders.com



OAC's Website
ObesityAction.org

This guide is brought to you by the **Obesity Action Coalition (OAC)**. The OAC is a National non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals affected by the disease of obesity through awareness, education, advocacy and support.

In addition to this guide, the OAC has many resources to help you on your journey toward improved health. The OAC strives to offer science-based educational materials designed to allow everyone to make educated decisions about their weight and health.

It is our hope that you will use this guide throughout your journey. Inside, you will find many useful tools such as; a food journal, activity tracker, body mass index (BMI) chart and much more. These tools will help you learn more about your lifestyle choices and help you track your progress. If you have any questions regarding this guide or any other resource, please email info@obesityaction.org or call **(800) 717-3117**.



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Your weight and health go hand-in-hand. This section discusses why your weight is important, ways to measure your weight, obesity and obesity-related conditions. It is important to understand why and how your weight affects your health.

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LIFESTYLE MODIFICATIONS

Your lifestyle choices greatly affect your overall weight and health. In this section, we will look at some ways you can make modifications to achieve a healthy lifestyle, including how to make SMART goals. Lifestyle and behavioral modifications are one way to improve your weight and health and may work alone or combined with other treatments.

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NUTRITION

Information and tips on food and nutrition are all around us, but knowing how to make healthy food choices in the moment can still be hard. This section provides the basics for making healthy food choices and understanding how nutrition affects your health.

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MANAGING YOUR WEIGHT & HEALTH

Understanding how lifestyle choices and nutrition affect your health is very important, and so is knowing that there is not one specific way to manage your weight and health. This section explores options to help you manage your weight and health long term.

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TOOLS FOR STAYING ON TRACK WITH YOUR HEALTH & WEIGHT GOALS

This section discusses options for keeping you focused on reaching your health and wellness goals. It also provides you with useful tools to help you on your journey toward improved health.

SECTION 1

YOUR WEIGHT & HEALTH

There are a number of reasons your weight can matter to you. Perhaps you want to improve your health for your family or reduce the effects of obesity-related conditions such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension or sleep apnea. Weight matters to people for many different reasons, but the most important one is your health!

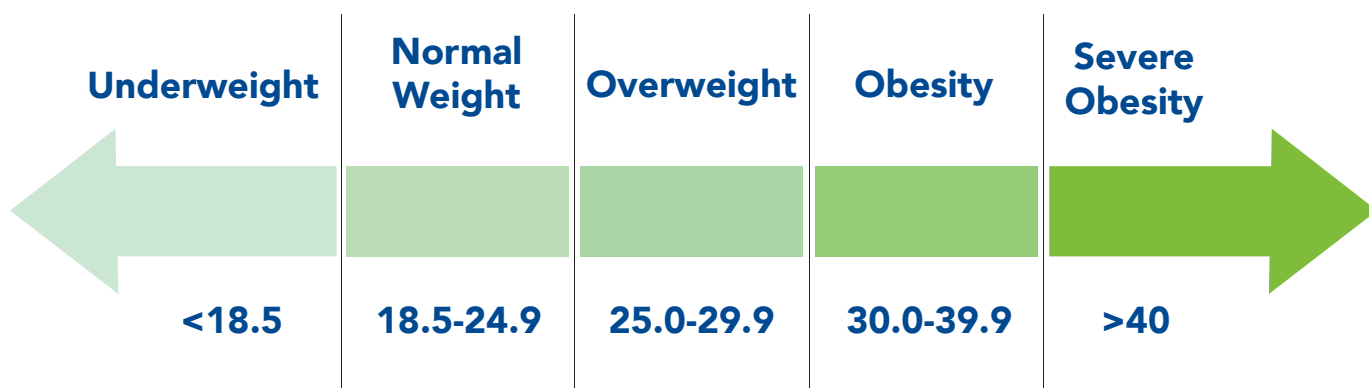
In this section you will learn more about weight, obesity, how weight is measured and obesity-related conditions. It is very important to understand how your weight can affect your health and what you can do to make healthy changes in your life.

What is Obesity?

If you asked your healthcare provider, "What is obesity?" they would likely tell you that it is a condition diagnosed when a person has too much body fat. That does not simply mean you have eaten too much and not exercised enough. Excess body fat can be a side effect of medication, due to genetics, environmental factors or a combination of many reasons. If you are concerned about your weight, it is important to measure it and talk with a healthcare provider.

Measuring Your Weight

One of the most common tools for measuring weight is to calculate your body mass index or BMI. BMI measures weight related to height. It is a common way to measure body fat and is one tool healthcare providers use when talking about weight.



For example: If you are 60 inches tall (5 feet) and weigh 200 pounds, your BMI would be 39. A BMI of 39 would place you in the obesity range on the BMI chart.

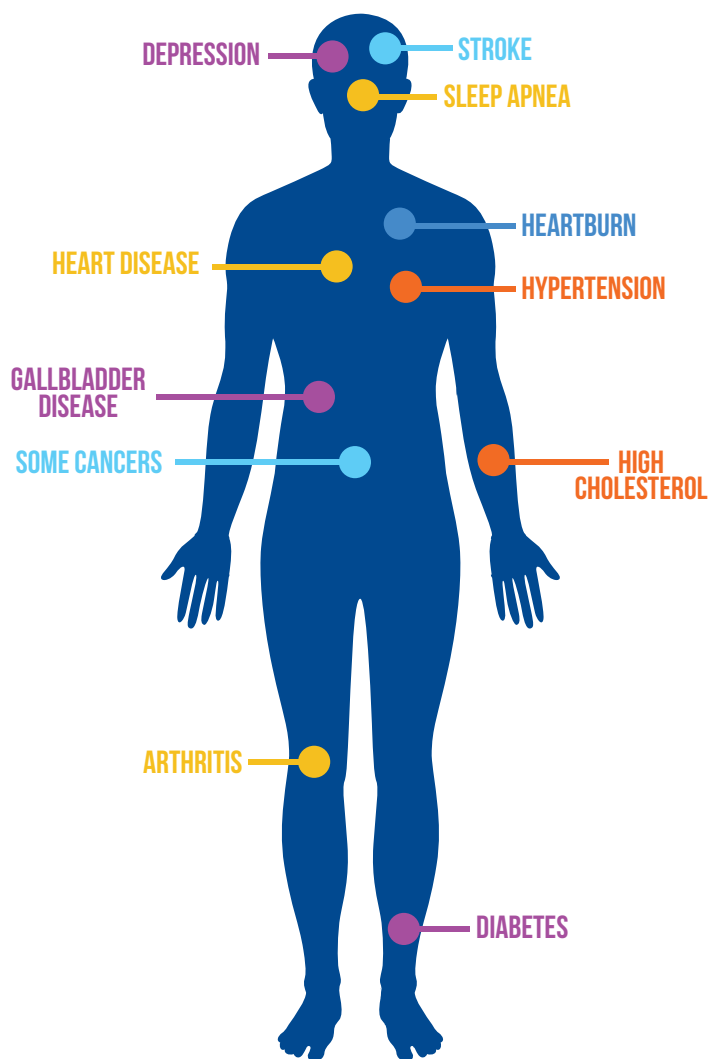
To calculate your BMI, you can turn to page 50 of this guide. Once you have calculated your BMI, consider talking with your healthcare provider about your weight if your BMI is in the overweight, obesity or severe obesity range.

The table is a BMI chart showing weight in pounds for various heights. The columns represent weight in pounds (130 to 400) and the rows represent height in inches (5'0" to 6'5"). The chart is color-coded by BMI category: Underweight (Less than 18.5), Normal (18.5-24.9), Overweight (25-29.9), Obesity (30-39.9), and Severe Obesity (Greater than 40).

YOUR WEIGHT & HEALTH

Obesity-related Conditions

Understanding your weight and how it affects your health is important because more than 50 health conditions are related to excess weight and obesity. Examples of these conditions include:



Even on its own, weight is a serious concern. When combined with some of the obesity-related conditions mentioned above, weight can negatively affect your health and quality of life. To know more about your weight or the conditions listed, it is important to have a discussion with your healthcare provider. Your weight and overall health can be managed with the help of your healthcare team.

What are the Long-term Effects of Obesity?



The long-term effects of obesity can be dangerous to your health. From diabetes and hypertension to stroke, it is important to take your health and weight seriously. Factors that determine how obesity impacts your health include genetic factors and how long you have been affected by obesity.

Thankfully, there are proven ways to treat obesity and excess weight. Weight-loss of 5-10% can greatly improve your health. Medications designed to treat obesity are available, and depending on your overall health, your healthcare provider may discuss bariatric (or weight-loss) surgery with you. As with any treatment choice, it is important to talk with your healthcare provider, make sure you are making healthy lifestyle changes and remember that there is no “magic pill” to cure obesity.

LIFESTYLE MODIFICATIONS

Choosing what you eat and do each day are examples of your behaviors. They include nearly every decision you make and can greatly impact your health. Do you grab a quick bite from a fast food restaurant or pack a healthy lunch? Do you make time to exercise? Are your behaviors influencing your family's behaviors too? This section discusses easy ways you can make healthy lifestyle choices. Changing behaviors that may have contributed to weight gain is one way to improve your weight and health — either alone or with other weight management options.

Healthy lifestyle options include:

- » **Self-monitoring**
- » **Physical activity**
- » **Support groups**

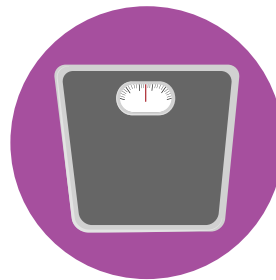


Self-monitoring

Losing weight is not necessarily as simple as eating less and moving more. There is also no one-size-fits-all approach to weight management. Self-monitoring is an easy and effective way to keep track of what food and beverages you consume, how much you exercise and more. Your goal in monitoring your lifestyle should be to increase self-awareness of your choices and make modifications where necessary.

Some commonly used self-monitoring tools include:

- **Food journals**
- **Regular self-weighing**
- **Activity trackers or apps**
- **Wearable wrist-bands and smart watches**



Each of these tools can be used to track your daily activities and lifestyle choices. Tracking them can help you see a pattern in your choices. You can use these patterns to find which ones can lead to weight gain and which ones can lead to weight-loss. No matter how you choose to track your lifestyle choices; self-monitoring is a crucial tool in weight-loss, weight management and long-term healthy living.

Physical Activity

Before you begin any new physical activity plan, be sure to check with your healthcare provider. Physical activity is a key part of any health and wellness plan. Combining physical activity with healthier eating is an important step in beginning to reach your goals. Increasing your physical activity will help you feel better and give you more energy. Physical activity can not only help you manage your weight, but it may also contribute to healthy bones and make you feel good.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), adults ages 18-64 should get the following amount of physical activity each week:

<p>2 Hours 30 Minutes (150 minutes) of moderate-intensity activity, like brisk walking, every week</p> <p>AND</p> <p>2 Days or More Per Week Muscle-strengthening activities that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms)</p>	 OR 	<p>1 Hour 15 Minutes (75 minutes) of vigorous-intensity activity, like jogging or running, every week</p> <p>AND</p> <p>2 Days or More Per Week Muscle-strengthening activities that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms)</p>	 OR 	<p>An Equivalent Mix of moderate and vigorous-intensity activity every week</p> <p>AND</p> <p>2 Days or More Per Week Muscle-strengthening activities that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms)</p>
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Measuring Your Exercise Intensity

Exercise is measured by a term called Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE). RPE is a physical activity scale of one to 10, where one is the easiest (like lying in bed) and 10 is the hardest (like sprinting as fast as you can). You should aim to have physical activity at a rate around six or seven.

If you are walking with someone, keeping a level six or seven pace would be one where you can have a conversation, but will need to take regular, deep breaths. If you are exercising above that level, it will be very hard or impossible to carry on a conversation at the same time.



Low Intensity

This is an activity level you can continue for a longer period of time, such as shopping, a casual walking pace or housework.



Moderate Intensity

This level of activity will get your heart rate up and it will take effort to maintain the intensity. This level will help you maintain your health.



Vigorous Intensity

This level of activity will feel like an all-out effort. Your heart rate will be high and you will not be able to speak complete sentences without taking several breaths. This level of intensity improves athletic conditioning.

Exercise can come in many forms and does not always have to mean spending hours in the gym. Here are some great examples of simple exercises that you can do alone or with a partner:

- **Brisk walking (15-minute mile pace)**
- **Yard or house work**
- **Leisurely bike ride**
- **Playing with family**
- **Light swimming**

Once you have decided to make a commitment to exercise, you can set a SMART Goal and use the FITT Principle to make a plan.

Start by Developing Your Exercise Goals

Developing fitness goals is an important step in beginning or changing your physical activity habits. Saying you are going to walk more is a great idea, but if a goal is that vague, it will be easier to come up with excuses not to walk and you might wonder if you really have been walking more. Developing SMART goals that follow the FITT principle can help you be successful on your weight management journey.



Specific

Pick one specific behavior to modify per goal.

Measurable

Can you measure this goal against a baseline?

Attainable

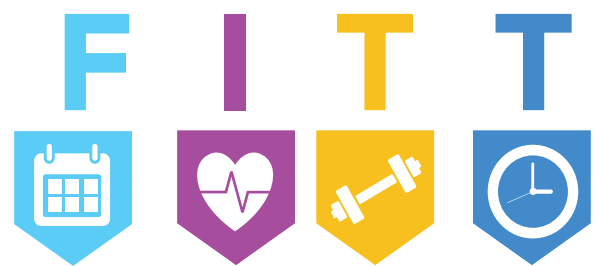
Is the goal attainable? Use action words when writing goals. For example: "I can take a walk each night after dinner," or "I will drink one less can of soda each day."

Realistic

Do you have realistic and honest expectations of yourself with your time, body and likes/dislikes?

Timely

Is your timeline for modifications reasonable and manageable?



Frequency

How often will you exercise?

Intensity

How hard will you exercise?

Type

What kind of exercise will you do?

Time

How long will you exercise?

SMART Goals that follow the FITT Principle are clearly defined and allow you to easily know if you are keeping to your plan.

Goal Example:	SMART Goals that Follow the FITT Principle	Poor Goals
<i>"I want to increase my cardiovascular exercise."</i>		❌
<i>"I need to lose weight."</i> These goals are too general and do not clearly define a plan.		❌
<i>"I will increase the amount I exercise by walking two times a day for 15 minutes each on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. I will walk at a pace that is somewhat difficult, or a moderate intensity."</i>	✅	
<i>"I will record what I eat and drink as well as the amount I exercise each day. My goal is to consume less than 2,000 calories per day and to exercise for 150 minutes per week."</i>	✅	

Remember these few things about exercise:

- **Make it simple.**
- **Make it happen.**
- **Make it realistic.**
- **Most importantly,**

➤ **make it fun!**



The most important commitment **YOU** can make is to **YOUR** weight and health!

The chart below shows on average how many calories you burn based on the type of activity you choose and your weight.

Activity (1-hour duration)	160 pounds	200 pounds	240 pounds
Aerobics, high impact	533	664	796
Aerobics, low impact	365	455	545
Aerobics, water	402	501	600
Backpacking	511	637	763
Basketball game	584	728	872
Bicycling, < 10 mph, leisure	292	364	436
Bowling	219	273	327
Canoeing	256	319	382
Dancing, ballroom	219	273	327
Football, touch or flag	584	728	872
Golfing, carrying clubs	314	391	469
Hiking	438	546	654
Ice skating	511	637	763
Racquetball	511	637	763
Resistance (weight) training	365	455	545
Rollerblading	548	683	818
Rope jumping	861	1,074	1,286
Rowing, stationary	438	546	654
Running, 5 mph	606	755	905
Running, 8 mph	861	1,074	1,286
Skiing, cross-country	496	619	741
Skiing, downhill	314	391	469
Skiing, water	438	546	654
Softball or baseball	365	455	545
Stair treadmill	657	819	981
Swimming, laps	423	528	632
Tae kwon do	752	937	1,123
Tai chi	219	273	327
Tennis, singles	584	728	872
Volleyball	292	364	436
Walking, 2 mph	204	255	305
Walking, 3.5 mph	314	391	469

Support Groups

The journey of improving your health and weight can sometimes feel like a difficult and lonely one. Finding the right weight management plan can take time and be mixed with setbacks.

However, you are not alone. Support groups are a wonderful resource for you and others to share and learn with each other. Support groups can be women-only, men-only, faith-based, offered by your local community center or available online. Finding a support group does not have to be difficult.

Here are some ideas for finding and engaging in one near you:

- **Ask your healthcare provider for a support group reference.**
- **Do not be afraid to speak up and share your story. There is a good chance someone else in the room is thinking or feeling or going through the same thing.**
- **If you feel uncomfortable meeting face to face, consider a web-based support group.**

Support groups can be a safe place to meet and share experiences with others who are dealing with the same struggles. They often provide a way for you to speak freely about a variety of issues, concerns, successes and setbacks surrounding your journey with weight and health.



» Take Away

Your everyday choices are your behaviors. They include everything from how much sleep you get each night to what you have for lunch and if you take the stairs or the elevator. Your behaviors join together to form your lifestyle. Making lifestyle modifications is key for managing your health. Finding modifications that work and are ones you can keep long term can be the hardest to make, but they also give you the greatest results on your weight management journey.





What should I eat? How much do I eat? Why is the food I eat important?

These are common questions people ask every day. There is so much information regarding food and nutrition, it can be difficult to determine which choices you should make on a daily basis. One thing is for sure, the food you eat can impact your body in a positive way. Many people know this, but question the specifics.

This section provides the basics for making healthy food choices and understanding how nutrition affects your health. We talk about:

- » [What is Nutrition?](#)
- » [Calories](#)
- » [Food Science 101](#)
- » [The Four Main Food Groups](#)
- » [Portion Sizes](#)
- » [Beverage Choices](#)
- » [Meal Planning](#)
- » [Reading a Food Label](#)
- » [Grocery Shopping Guidelines](#)
- » [Eating Out](#)
- » [Cooking](#)

What is Nutrition?

Let's start from the beginning. What is nutrition? Nutrition is how the food we eat affects our body. By following a healthy and balanced diet, your body will get the nutrients it needs for proper health to prevent disease, maintain a healthy weight and provide you with the energy you need for the day. One of the biggest reasons people should follow a nutritious diet is for the health benefits. Health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and obesity are impacted by the foods you eat. Choosing certain foods can help with managing these conditions.

When looking at your diet, it is important to remember that all foods can fit into your plan and that there is no such thing as a perfect diet. Many health professionals recommend three things when it comes to nutrition:

- **Moderation:** Moderation is a great way to look at nutrition and can be a good rule to live by. When thinking about moderation, remember that every food can fit. Try not to think of foods as good or bad. For example: eating french fries, a greasy hamburger and a big slice of chocolate cake all in the same meal would not be a great idea.
- **Balance:** By balancing the foods you eat, you mostly choose foods that are high in nutritional value and may occasionally put in a food with lower nutritional values. Pick one of those foods mentioned above and swap the others. Instead of a burger and fries, choose a salad with grilled chicken and light dressing. For dessert, have a small slice of chocolate cake. That is balance and moderation.
- **Variety:** Don't forget variety. Foods can provide you with a variety of different nutrients, but if you eat the same foods every day, you will be getting the same nutrients each time. By trying a variety of lean protein, fruits, vegetables and grains, you will give your body an array of nutrients.

Calories

All foods contain calories. A calorie is a unit of energy. Calories are not bad, you need them to live and perform all daily tasks. Each food contains a certain number of calories, depending on their ingredients. Typically, foods that contain high amounts of sugar and fat have higher amount of calories, while foods with lower amounts of sugar and fat have fewer calories.

Children 2-3 yrs	1000 cal
Children 4-8 yrs	1200-1400 cal
Girls 9-13 yrs	1600 cal
Boys 9-13 yrs	1800 cal
Girls 14-18 yrs	1800 cal
Boys 14-18 yrs	2200 cal
Females 19-30 yrs	2000 cal
Males 19-30 yrs	2400 cal
Females 31-50 yrs	1800 cal
Males 31-50 yrs	2200 cal
Females 51+ yrs	1600 cal
Males 51+ yrs	2000 cal

Chart from ChooseMyPlate.gov

Balancing the calories you take in from food and beverages with the energy you burn through activity each day helps determine your weight. When you take in only the number of calories you need each day your weight is maintained. If you take in more than you need, you may gain weight. The proper balance between activity and food will help you reach and maintain a healthy weight.

Your body requires calories every day to perform your daily activities. Each person needs a different amount of calories to get the energy they need. The number of daily calories you need depends on many things including:

- **Your size.**
- **The amount of muscle you have.**
- **How old you are.**
- **How active you are.**
- **Your genetics.**

What do Calories Look Like?

Both Columns Total 1,800 Calories, but One is Much Healthier.

To the left, you will find a chart from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regarding average calorie amounts suggested for different populations. Remember, this is just a guide and may vary from person to person.

Breakfast	2 Eggs ½ cup Orange Juice Toast 1 cup Berries Skim Milk 450 calories		1 Donut 300 Calories	
Lunch	3 ounces Chicken Salad Light Dressing Whole Grain Rice Fresh Fruit Skim Milk 430 calories		One Piece Pepperoni Pizza Breadstick Kool-Aid® 700 calories	
Dinner	3 ounce Roast Beef Baked Potato Green Beans Small Dinner Roll 1 teaspoon Margarine 460 calories		Fast Food Hamburger Medium French Fries Soda 1000 calories	

Food Science 101

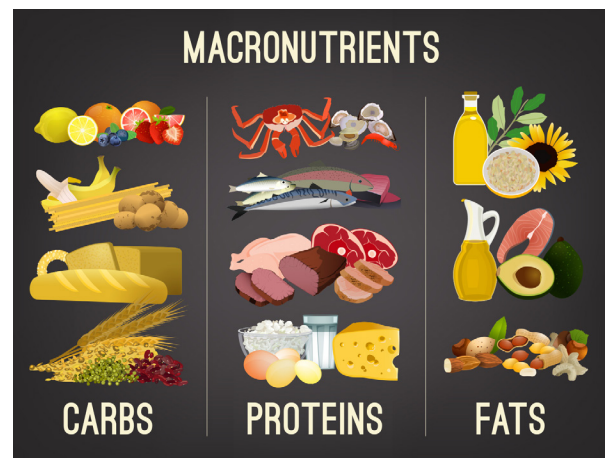
Very few people know and understand the basics and importance of food. We shop for food at the grocery store, but think very little about what makes up the slices of watermelon in the produce section, the loaf of whole wheat bread from the bakery or even the package of boneless, skinless chicken breasts in the meat department.

In addition to the natural building blocks of food (macronutrients, vitamins and minerals), foods that are processed tend to have additives (items to add sweetness, flavor or prevent spoiling). Over the next several pages, we will discuss the basics of food so you can feel confident in selecting healthy foods for your shopping cart.

Macronutrients

Simply put, food is broken down into three macronutrients (carbs, proteins and fats). Macronutrients make up the foods we eat. Together, macronutrients allow our bodies to grow, develop, repair and have energy for the day. Each macronutrient has a different function in your body and provides it with something your body needs.

Most foods have a combination of carbohydrates, protein and fat, and each of these do something very specific in your body. Despite what you might read in magazines, all of these are necessary and perform a specific function in your body and it's the combination of all three that keep you healthy. Your healthcare provider may make recommendations for how much of each to have as part of your plan based on your overall health. There are many ways to modify amounts for certain health conditions, food allergies, intolerances or weight management plans.



Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates (or “carbs”) provide your body with the fuel that it needs to get through the day. Carbohydrates are your main source of energy because your body breaks down the carbohydrate in the food you eat and turns it to glucose. This glucose is used for energy or stored in your muscles or liver if your body does not need the energy right away. Carbohydrates supply your body with four calories per gram. Some carbohydrates are better for you than others – although all foods can truly fit.

Simple Carbohydrates: Simple carbohydrates, often called simple sugars, are easily broken down or digested by your body. Some simple carbs are healthy choices and include milk and fruit. They provide your body with some of the key nutrients it needs.

Other examples of simple carbohydrates are refined grain products such as white bread, white pasta and white rice. These simple carbohydrates are often called “bad carbs” and have been processed and lack the fiber and nutrients that whole grain choices do. Simple carbohydrates can also be the sugars you find in a candy bar or a bowl of sugar. They are broken down easily in your body and provide little nutritional value, but a lot of calories. Simple sugars are not healthy choices.

Complex Carbohydrates: Complex carbohydrates provide your body with energy as well as the fiber and some nutrients it needs daily. Complex carbohydrates take your body longer to digest. Some examples include whole grain pasta, brown rice, whole grain breads and vegetables. It is recommended that foods with complex carbohydrates be chosen more often than those with simple carbohydrates.

Fiber: Fiber is a complex carbohydrate and is important for a healthy diet. It passes through your digestive system undigested. Fiber is found in foods such as whole grains, vegetables, fruits and beans. We all know fiber can help prevent constipation, but it has a variety of other benefits as well. Fiber can help you feel full and satisfied for a longer period of time, reduce your risk of developing heart disease or diabetes and help with weight management.

Healthy adults should aim to consume at least 25 grams of fiber per day. It can be tricky to meet your fiber needs; but whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables and beans can all be great fiber sources.

Fats

Fat has a high number of calories (nine calories per gram). However, it is also a source of energy and helps your body absorb the fat-soluble vitamins you eat. Fat provides satiety (feeling of fullness) as you eat, improves the flavor of food and also improves the mouth feel of foods.

Every person needs to eat a certain amount of fat. The problem is most of us eat too much of it, as many of the foods we enjoy contain high amounts of fat. Overconsumption of fat may lead to a higher risk of developing heart disease and hyperlipidemia. Fat consumption also plays a role in weight management. When you choose higher fat foods, you are likely taking in more calories, which can affect your weight. There are different types of fat that have different functions in your body.

There are four main types of fat. Some of them are healthier and can be eaten in moderation, while others should be avoided. Even when you are using a healthier fat, it is important to remember to use them sparingly as they contain nine calories per gram.



The American Heart Association Guidelines suggest that you limit fat calories to 25-30% of your total daily calories. Fat often gets a bad name—but is a necessary part of your diet.

Type of Fat	Examples	Healthier Fats	Not so Healthy Fats
Saturated Fat	Whole milk, butter and heavily marbled cuts of meat		❌
Trans-fat	Baked goods, cookies, margarines		❌
Monounsaturated Fats	Olive, canola and sunflower oils	✅	
Polyunsaturated Fats	Corn and soybean oils, fatty fish (salmon, herring and trout)	✅	



Saturated Fat: Saturated fat is a not so healthy fat that comes from animal products and full fat dairy products. Saturated fat should be limited due to the way it affects your body by raising your total cholesterol and your LDLs (bad cholesterol). The American Heart Association recommends you consume no more than 5 to 6% of your total calories from saturated fat. This means if you eat around 1500 calories, you should take in only around 75 calories from saturated fat, or 8 grams.

Trans-fat: Trans-fat is another not so healthy fat mostly made by the hydrogenation (the process that allows liquid foods to stay liquid on the shelf) of food products while processing. Hydrogenated oil is easier to cook with and does not spoil like natural oil, so manufacturers prefer it. Trans-fat will be labeled as “partially hydrogenated fat” on a food label. Trans-fat can increase your LDL (bad cholesterol) and decrease your HDL (good cholesterol) which can affect your risk for heart disease. The American Heart Association recommends people limit their consumption of all trans-fat containing foods.

Monounsaturated Fats: These are a healthier option of fats and can be used to replace saturated and trans-fat. Some oils as well as many nuts and seeds are good sources of monounsaturated fats. These fats can improve your health by lowering your cholesterol levels, which will lower your risk of developing cardiovascular disease.

Polyunsaturated Fats: These are healthier fats that can reduce your risk of developing heart disease by lowering your bad cholesterol. Some nuts and seeds such as walnuts and flaxseed also contain polyunsaturated fats. Omega-3s are a type of polyunsaturated fat and provide necessary fat that your body cannot produce on its own. They are linked to improving lipid levels, reducing depression and improving other health conditions. They are found in fatty fish, walnuts, soybean oil and flaxseed oil.

Protein

Protein is a building nutrient and is used for cell growth and development, as well as healing and muscle mass maintenance. Protein is found in a variety of food sources, but is most common in meat sources such as:



Chicken



Beef



Fish



Dairy



Beans

There are small amounts of protein in some vegetables as well. When choosing protein-based foods, it is also important to watch the fat content. Many protein-based choices are also higher in fat. A few things to remember when selecting protein sources are:

- Choose lean meats.
- Trim the fat off your meat.
- Choose low-fat dairy.

People often wonder how much protein their body needs every day. It is recommended to take in 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of your body weight per day. For example, someone who weighs 200 pounds would need 73 grams of protein per day.

Food -	Amount of Protein -
3 ounces of meat	21 grams
1 cup milk	8 grams
1 cup dry beans	16 grams
1 eight-ounce yogurt	11 grams

Some people wonder if they need protein supplements to meet their needs. The simple answer is most people do not. When people strength train, they typically need a little protein, but you should generally be able to meet your needs with a balance plan.

Vitamins and Minerals

Every food that you eat contains different vitamins and minerals. All are important and provide different functions in your body. Eating a varied diet can help ensure you get the nutrition your body needs.

The foods you eat provide a variety of the nutrients that we talk about in this guide, as well as hundreds more. Many people feel if they take a multivitamin, there is no need to eat healthy foods because the multivitamin gives them everything they need. This is incorrect! There are many benefits from healthy food that you cannot get by just relying on a multivitamin. Use your multivitamin as an insurance policy, but eat a healthy diet as well. Choose healthy foods to ensure your body gets the fiber, antioxidants and nutrient benefits that aren't always in a multivitamin.



Vitamin A

Vitamin A is a fat-soluble vitamin that has many functions that help with growth and development, the immune system and good vision. Vitamin A can be found in foods such as cod liver oil, liver, kale, spinach, pumpkin, collard greens, sweet potato, carrots and broccoli.



Vitamin D

Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin that is naturally found in few foods. It is added to many foods, and you can also get Vitamin D from the sun. This vitamin helps with calcium absorption, cell growth and immune function. It is found in many fortified dairy products.



Vitamin C

Vitamin C is an antioxidant and its most important function is to maintain the body's immune system. It is also important in growth and repair of your body's tissues. Good sources of vitamin C include: citrus fruit, mango, cantaloupe, broccoli, peppers and spinach.

Vitamin E

Vitamin E is a fat-soluble vitamin and an antioxidant as well. It protects your body from free radicals (damaged cells in your body) and helps in your body's immune function. Vitamin E is found in nuts, seeds and oils.

Food Additives

Food additives are substances added to food to enhance taste and flavor or preserve freshness. This area of food science can become very complicated and can involve a number of substances. For our discussion, we will focus on sugar, sugar substitutes and sodium.

NATURAL VS. ADDED SUGARS

NATURAL



ADDED SUGARS



Sugar

Sugar is a simple carbohydrate, and Americans eat a lot of it. On average, Americans consume 19.5 teaspoons (82 grams) per day. This exceeds daily recommendations. Sugar can be found naturally in foods such as fruits or milk. Sugar is also added to processed foods to improve their taste. It is often added to foods that are marketed as reduced or low-fat.

As obesity rates rise, sugar has been found to be one of the main contributors. Adding sugar to food increases the caloric intake for Americans, which may lead to weight gain. In addition, sugar intake is also linked to increased rates of heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

You should know that sugar comes in many different forms and can be listed on the nutrition ingredient panel as:

- Sucrose
- Glucose
- Fructose
- High fructose corn syrup
- Cane sugar
- Honey
- Agave



No matter what form it comes in, it is still a form of sugar and can add calories to your diet.

How Much Sugar Should You Have? Follow the Three Ingredient Rule – Ingredients are listed in order of greatest to least amount on the ingredient panel of the label. For example, if sugar is listed first, it is the ingredient there is the most of in the product.

When you are reading the ingredients on a food product, if sugar or any form of sugar is one of the first three, determine if this is a food you truly want to add to your diet. Limit these choices to once in a while when shopping. The American Heart Association recommends no more than six teaspoons (25 grams) for women or nine teaspoons (35 grams) for men of added sugar per day.

Sugar Substitutes: Sugar substitutes are very popular as they can be used to make a product taste sweet without adding calories. They are sweeter than sugar and are added to drinks, yogurts and even some desserts. There are multiple types of substitutes and a few more popular choices are listed below:

Artificial Sweeteners: Artificial substitutes such as NutraSweet, Sweet’N Low and SLENDA® add sweetness to a product without adding calories. They are helpful for people with diabetes. Sometimes, artificial sweeteners are criticized because they are not a natural product. Remember, everything should be consumed in moderation. This is true for sweeteners. For those who prefer natural sweeteners, Stevia is a natural sweetener which has no calories as it comes from the Stevia plant and is a way to naturally sweeten foods. All substitutes are regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and have recommended intake amounts.

Sugar Alcohols: Sugar alcohols are sweeteners used in products such as baked goods, protein bars and other processed foods. Examples include xylitol and mannitol. They provide a sweet taste with fewer calories, but do contain a small amount of carbohydrates. Sometimes they are used with artificial sweeteners. These sweeteners are also regulated by the FDA. One concern is that eating large amounts of foods containing mannitol may have a laxative effect on your body.

Sodium

Sodium (or salt) may be linked to high blood pressure in some people. High sodium diets are common among Americans mostly because we eat a highly processed diet. The American Heart Association recommendation is to aim for less than 2300mg of sodium per day. This can be tough to meet as many Americans consume close to 3500 mg, but doable if you follow the tips in this guide.



Tips to Reduce Sodium in Your Foods:

AVOID processed foods: Frozen pizza, boxed dinners and canned soups are amongst the highest in sodium. Aim to avoid everything that comes in a box or is packaged.

CHOOSE fresh: When you choose fresh fruits, veggies and meat, you will limit your sodium intake.

SKIP the salt shaker: Don’t put it on the table and vow to try your foods before salting.

READ the label: Know your number. Aim for less than 1500 mg of sodium daily. Be aware of high sodium content foods. Limit these or balance them with lower sodium options.

The Four Main Food Groups

There are many choices you can make in your diet. With so many foods available to choose from it is important to make the right choices from each group.

Fruits & Vegetables

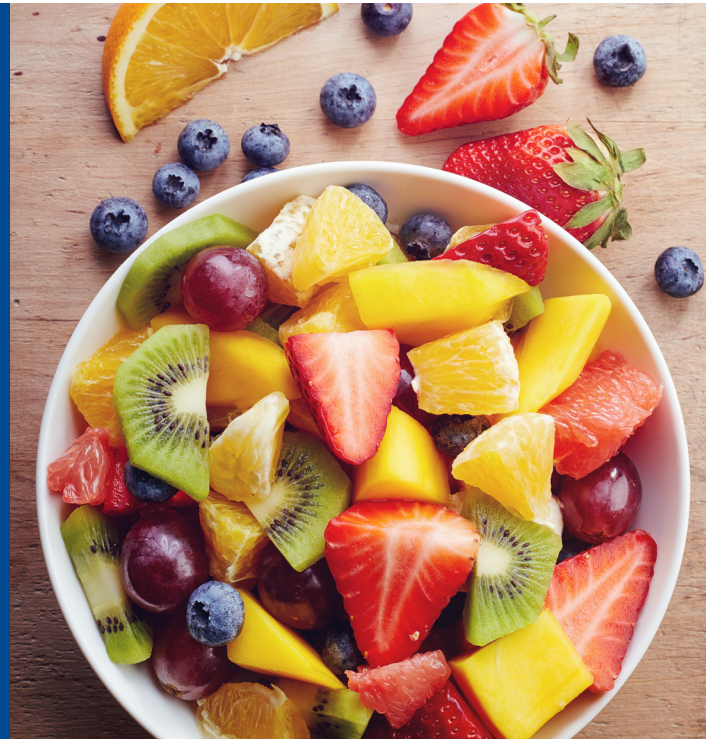
Fruits: Grapes, bananas, watermelon and berries are just a few of the great choices available that fit into your diet. Fruits are low in calories, high in fiber and packed with nutrients. They are a carbohydrate source and are naturally sweetened. Fruits are available in many ways: fresh, canned, frozen and juice.

QUICK TIPS:

- Fresh is always best, but canned, frozen or juice can work as well.
- When choosing canned fruits, opt for those packed in their own juice, and when choosing applesauce, opt for unsweetened.
- Juice is a good choice, but the calories can add up quickly. Remember a serving of juice is a half cup. Try to limit your consumption of juice to one serving and then fill up on fresh fruit.

ADDING FRUITS TO YOUR DIET:

- Aim for two cups of fruit per day.
- Top your cereal with fresh berries.
- Have a piece of fresh fruit for your afternoon snack.
- Slice bananas on your peanut butter sandwich.
- Blend fruit for a tasty smoothie.



Vegetables: Vegetables provide your body with fiber, nutrients, vitamins and minerals for just a few calories with each serving. Vegetables are also a source of carbohydrates and provide your body with a small amount of protein. Remember, the recommendation is to fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables. Vegetables can be fresh, frozen, canned or juiced. There are so many options to choose from!

It is recommended that adults consume three cups of vegetables per day. Again, fresh is always best, but that may not always be an option. Frozen vegetables can be a great choice because they allow you to prepare as much or as little as you would like. Canned vegetables are an option as well, but it is a good idea to rinse them first to reduce their sodium content.



TIPS TO GET YOUR VEGGIES IN EACH DAY:

- Add fresh peppers and onions to your scrambled eggs.
- Add a side salad to lunch or dinner.
- Chop up veggies and serve with a light dip for an afternoon snack.

Meats and Protein

Most people don't struggle to fit meat and protein choices in their daily meal plans. Options include meat, beans, eggs and nuts. Good sources of protein for your body include:



It can be a challenge when choosing foods that are high in protein and low in fat. It is best to choose skinless chicken, lean ground beef and small amounts of nuts. Determining how much meat you should eat at a meal can also appear tricky, but a great rule of thumb is to have a palm-size portion.

Dairy

Foods from the dairy group provide your body with protein, calcium and Vitamin D — nutrients you needed for strong bones and healthy teeth. Dairy choices include milk, cheese and yogurt. When choosing these foods, it is important to choose low-fat versions. Low-fat cheese, light yogurt and skim milk can provide you with the calcium you need without the extra fat.

» How Much Dairy do You Need?

It is recommended that adults consume three servings of dairy products each day. This could be one cup of low-fat or skim milk, one cup of low-fat yogurt or one to one and a half ounces of cheese.



Grains

Grains provide your body with the energy it needs from carbohydrates and are made from wheat, rice, barley or corn. These foods are high in fiber and B vitamins. Examples of grain-based foods include:

- Breads
- Rice
- Pasta
- Tortillas
- Cereals

The healthiest grains are whole grains, or grains that include the entire kernel. They include brown rice, whole grain pasta and whole grain bread. Refined grains are grains that are processed, which removes the bran and germ. Processing gives the grain a finer texture, but takes away much of the grain's nutritional value. Refined grain choices include white bread, white pasta and white rice. When making a choice, it is best to choose the whole grains.

It is recommended that adults eat between five to eight one-ounce servings per day. The more active you are, the more you may need. It is important to pay attention to serving and portion sizes. For products like pasta, many people will eat three times the amount of a recommended serving size. A number of healthy eating programs suggest consuming fewer carbohydrates for weight-loss and management.

Grain Serving Size Chart

Pasta	½ cup
Rice	½ cup
English Muffin	½ muffin
Crackers	5
Oatmeal	½ cup

Portion Sizes

It's always important to make sure you are eating the right portion of food. Even if you choose foods that are part of your plan, it is important to not over portion foods on your plate. Many labels list serving size amounts in cup or half-cup measurements. It can be hard to visualize, so here are some guidelines:



1 cup



1/2 cup



1 medium fruit



3 ounces of meat



3 ounces of fish

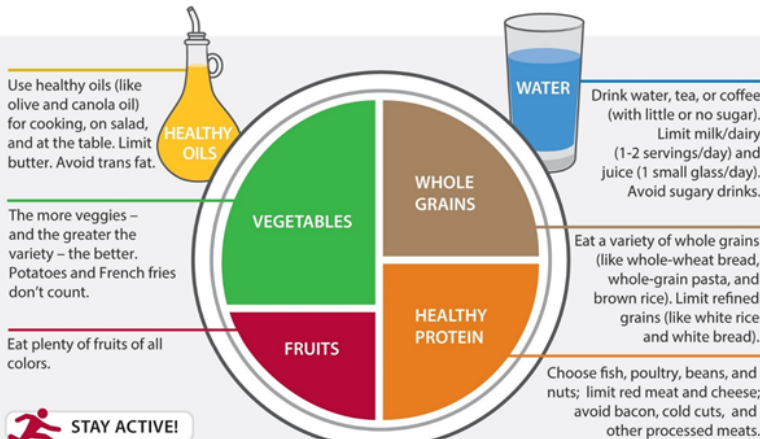


1 teaspoon of butter



1 ounce of cheese

HEALTHY EATING PLATE



STAY ACTIVE!

© Harvard University

Harvard School of Public Health
The Nutrition Source
www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource

Harvard Medical School
Harvard Health Publications
www.health.harvard.edu

» PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Putting all the information together can be difficult to do. The Harvard School of Public Health came up with a way to keep things simple called the Healthy Eating Plate (pictured left). You can use this guide when planning your meals. This is a simple way to know how much to eat and how your plate should look at all your meals!

Beverage Choices

Fluids are an important part of your nutritional plan. Your body needs water to flush toxins out of the body, transport nutrients to your cells and provide a moist environment for your eyes, ears and mouth. If you don't get enough fluid, you will become dehydrated and can feel very tired and lack energy.

We all know we need fluid during the day, but typically people are unsure of the amount. A good rule of thumb is to drink at least eight, eight-ounce glasses of fluid every day. This is a great start. Remember, if you are exercising or out in the heat, this number may need to increase the amount you drink. What fluids should you drink every day?



There are many choices available, but remember to choose wisely!

Milk: Milk can be a great source of protein, calcium and vitamin D. When choosing milk, be sure to choose a low-fat option such as 1% milk.

Juice: Juice can be a healthy choice in moderation. When choosing juice, remember to choose 100% juice and watch your serving size. The serving size for juice is a half-cup. That's not a lot of juice! Many people pour a glass of juice that is two or more cups. That is the equivalent of four apples! If you are choosing juice, be sure to keep your portion to one serving.

Water: Water is always best! It will hydrate you with no added sugar or additives. If you want to add flavor to your water, consider adding slices cucumbers or strawberries.

Sodas and Sweetened Beverages: Regular sodas and sweetened drinks are very popular, but they come with lots of extra sugar and calories. Many sodas contain more than eight teaspoons of sugar in each drink. That's a lot!

Alcohol: To be part of a healthy diet, any alcohol needs to be consumed in moderation. Alcohol contains seven calories per gram, so it is higher in calories than carbohydrates and protein. You should also consider the calories of what may be mixed with your alcohol choice.

» DID YOU KNOW?

A shot of alcohol (1.5-ounce) has around 100 calories. An eight-ounce margarita can have around 500 due to the sugar content of the mixer. A five-ounce glass of wine or a 12-ounce light beer also has around 100 calories, but you must be very mindful of serving sizes. It is easy to drink more than the serving size.

»» Dispelling the Myths

The topic of nutrition can result in much controversy. You might hear people say things like, “The best way to lose weight,” or “This is a magic food that provides everything you need.” Remember, there is no magic food, and the only way to eat healthy is to apply the basics of a balanced diet. Below is a list of food myths you might have heard before:

MYTH: Eat one meal a day to lose weight.

TRUTH So many people feel that by skipping meals you get in fewer calories and will lose weight. This can be true in theory, but here is the problem. When you only eat one meal per day, your body does not get the fuel it needs to do its daily function. Food is fuel and how can you expect your body to perform its daily functions without fuel! It’s like asking a car to run without gas. The other problem with eating one meal per day is people typically eat one huge meal because they are so hungry from not eating earlier. Sometimes this can even result in more calories than if you would have eaten three meals. When skipping meals, others begin eating snacks throughout the day as a result of being overly hungry.

THE RIGHT WAY: Eat three meals per day to provide your body the fuel it needs. A mix of all the food groups can provide you the energy you need. Try to eat every 4-5 hours. For some, this can be challenging. If you have to go a little longer between meals, consider adding a snack to make sure you don’t get overly hungry.

MYTH: A low-carbohydrate diet is the best way to lose weight.

TRUTH There are multiple plans you can choose from to lose weight. Talk to a healthcare provider to find a plan that is best for you. A lower carbohydrate plan may be an option for some people.

THE RIGHT WAY: All foods can fit. It is important for your overall health to develop a balanced eating plan.

MYTH: If you take a multivitamin, you don’t need to eat right.

TRUTH A multivitamin can be a great insurance policy to make sure you get the nutrition you need, but is in no way a replacement for a healthy diet. Some think if they take their multivitamin, they can down a bag of chips with a soda. No such luck!

THE RIGHT WAY: Eat a variety of foods every day. A mix of vegetables, fruits, protein and dairy will provide you with the nutrition your body needs. It is a good idea to take a multivitamin, because we all know, no one has a perfect diet.

MYTH: If I eat low-sugar or low-fat items, I can eat all I want.

TRUTH Again, this seems too easy! The label may say “no added sugar” or “Low-fat food.” However, it is important to review the entire label before you make a decision. For most foods, if manufacturers take out sugar, they add extra fat and if they take out fat, they add extra sugar. Typically, the calorie amount is the same. When consumers see these foods, which seem so healthy, it is easy to overdo it. Sometimes people eat three or four times the amount because the items seem healthy.

THE RIGHT WAY: Eat everything in moderation. A low-fat treat is ok. A full-fat treat is even ok. It is just important you balance it with other healthful choices. All foods can fit!

Meal Planning

Now that we have the food basics down, let's figure out how to put them into use. Menu planning is important for your overall health and wellbeing. We live fast-paced lives. Trying to balance work, family and other obligations can be hard. Many times, without planning ahead for meals, it is easy for us to make poor choices such as grabbing fast food or skipping meals. The norm for many is to heat up a frozen pizza or run through a fast food drive-thru for a quick dinner.



Planning meals can seem overwhelming at first, but there are so many positives ways your life can change for the better when you do. First, let's think about cost. A family of four can quickly spend \$25-\$30 at a fast food restaurant and more than \$50 for a sit-down restaurant. Now, take that number and multiply it by the number of times you eat out per week. Many people eat out multiple times per week!

Meal planning also saves time. It may not seem that way, but try timing yourself! How long does it take to get in the car, wait in line, eat and return home? This can add up quickly. Lastly — and most importantly — think about nutrition. Most restaurants aren't using the leanest meats, low-calorie sauces and fresh produce, like you would do at home. Processed frozen foods and boxed meals are full of sodium, fat and preservatives. You deserve the best nutrition for your health. By preparing meals at home, you guarantee this! It's time to change for you, your family and your long-term health.

READY TO PLAN? Let's Do It!

- 1. Decide how many days of meals you are going to plan.** Many people plan a week in advance, but for others, this is too overwhelming. You may want to start by planning just a few meals ahead.
- 2. Do your research.** Check your freezer and pantry for any staple items (spices or frozen meats or frozen vegetables) to use. Next, look through your grocery sale flyer or app for deals and build your meals around them.
- 3. Once you know what items are on sale and what's in your pantry, look at your schedule.** If you are planning for your evening meals, consider your evening activities. Different nights might require different kinds of meals. For example, on a soccer night, you may want to prepare a meal in a crock pot. On a lazy Sunday afternoon, you may choose a homemade soup. Don't forget to plan lunches that need to be packed and breakfast options.
- 4. Make your list and start shopping. By starting with a list, you are more likely to buy what you need.** If you shop without a list, you might be tempted to buy more unnecessary items. A list will also make sure you get what you need without making several trips to the store this week. What a time saver!
- 5. Enjoy what you prepared with your family!** Eating as a family is a great way to socialize and talk about each other's day.

Plan Variety in Your Meals

Meal plans do work, but people often complain that they become bored with repeating meals and have trouble thinking of new meal ideas. Getting out of a food rut your family is in can be a challenge, but it is doable. If you prepare foods that are nutritious and tasty, there is less of a temptation to eat out. Look online for new recipes, browse Pinterest or check-out a cookbook at the local library.

Make it a goal to try one new main dish, salad, or grain per week. If you find one you like, great! Have a three-ring binder, computer file or even a recipe box to store all of your “go to” recipes. As you add more recipes each week, you will develop a long list of possible entrées. Be brave and adventurous. This is a great way to expose your family to new foods and have them try new things. What a great way to develop healthy eaters.

» Tips and Tricks



Use Foods Twice –

This can be a very efficient way to meal plan. First, let’s talk about chicken. You may have two meals planned this week that use chicken, chicken and veggie stir fry and chicken noodle soup. Both of these meals call for chicken, so prepare the chicken for both meals at the same time.



Plan Ahead –

Chop, prep and store when you have time. We all have busy nights and not so busy nights. On the slow nights or weekends, chop up veggies for your lunch, prepare a fruit salad for the week, make sandwiches for your kids’ lunches and prepare tuna salad for the next night’s dinner.



Double Portions –

It doesn’t take that much longer to make extra meals when you have the chance. For example, instead of making one lasagna, make two. Freeze the second one and use it on one of your busy days when you are pressed for time.



Freeze Leftovers for Quick Lunches –

If you have a small amount of your dinner left, freeze it and save it for a lunch. This can be your own personal frozen entrée and can be so much healthier than the ones sold at the grocery! A serving of chili or a piece of lasagna can be a great lunch!



Find Substitutes for Your Old Favorites –

Everyone likes greasy pizza, french fries and burgers. You certainly don’t have to give them up. Look for ways to give your old favorites a make-over. Make a homemade pizza topped with lean ham and veggies or cut sweet potatoes into strips and bake them for a healthy french fry.



Now it’s time to get started. Get out your pen, paper or your computer and start planning. Remember, progress is the key. You may only get one or two meals planned this week, but it’s a start and one step closer to improved health!

Snack Choices

Eating regular meals is great, but there are times when you need to plan a snack to fit into your busy schedule. If you are going longer than five hours between meals, consider adding a snack. This will keep your energy level up and prevent you from being overly hungry the next meal. When most people think of snacks, they think about chips, cookies or candy. Remember, food is fuel. Choose something to give your body the nutrition it needs. Try a protein mixed with a whole grain, fruit or vegetable. Here are a few examples:

- Apples + Peanut Butter
- Cheese + Whole Grain Crackers
- Greek Yogurt + Berries
- Green Peppers + Hummus
- String Cheese + Fresh Fruit
- Cottage Cheese + Tomatoes



Reading a Food Label – Nutrition Facts

Deciding if a food is a healthy choice can be difficult. Luckily, each packaged food you purchase has a label on the back. The label will tell you exactly what is in the packaged food and is titled “Nutrition Facts.” It’s up to you to read this label and make sure you know what to look at and how to make a good decision.

Reading the Nutrition Facts label can be confusing. Often, consumers do not know what the terms and numbers mean. The tips on the following pages will give you quick insight on how to choose a healthy food product.

Portions and Servings: What is the difference?

A portion is how much food you eat at one time. A serving is the amount of food suggested on the Nutrition Facts or food label. Did you know the most important information about food is often printed on the back or side of a food product? That is where the Nutrition Facts for every food can be found. One of those facts is the serving size. Each food has its own suggested serving size from 13 pretzels to 250 ml of milk or one-ounce of cooked boneless, skinless chicken.

Sometimes a serving is the entire container (a yogurt cup or canned beverage) and sometimes there are many servings in one container (a bag of frozen peas). Servings are based on an "average" 2,000 calorie diet. It might be suggested that you consume fewer calories to lose or maintain weight. A dietitian can work with you to adjust the serving size listed on a package to be a portion that works best for you.

Daily Value: To the right on the label, you'll see "%DV." This stands for % Daily Value. It shows the percentage of nutrients your body will get from eating a serving of this food compared to what it needs for the day. For example, if your product has 20 under the %DV, it means you will be getting 20% of the fat you need for the entire day. Keep in mind; this is based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Ingredients: Toward the bottom of the label, you will see a listing of ingredients. These ingredients are listed in order of abundance in the food. The first ingredient listed is the ingredient that there is the most of in the food. If sugar is listed as the first ingredient, you will know the product contains lots of sugar.

- 1 Servings per container and serving size:** Compare your portion size to the serving size listed on the label. If the label serving size is one cup, and you eat two cups, you are getting twice the calories, fat and other nutrients listed on the label.
- 2 Calories per serving:** The number of calories in a single serving.
- 3 Total fat:** These numbers let you know how much total fat is in each serving as well as the amount of saturated or trans fats (fats to avoid) in each serving.
- 4 Sodium:** The amount of sodium (salt) in a single serving. It is suggested you limit total sodium intake to 2,400 mg per day, which is less than 1 teaspoon.
- 5 Added sugars:** The amount of sugar added to a product. It is advised to limit the amount of added sugars to 10% or less of your total calories per day.
- 6 Daily vitamins:** These numbers show the amount of needed daily vitamins per serving. Getting enough vitamins is important in maintain a healthy life.

Nutrition Facts	
1	8 servings per container Serving size 2/3 cup (55g)
2	Amount per serving Calories 230
	% Daily Value*
3	Total Fat 8g 10% Saturated Fat 1g 5% Trans Fat 0g
	Cholesterol 0mg 0%
4	Sodium 160mg 7%
	Total Carbohydrate 37g 13% Dietary Fiber 4g 14% Total Sugars 12g
5	Includes 10g Added Sugars 20%
	Protein 3g
6	Vitamin D 2mcg 10%
	Calcium 200mg 15%
	Iron 8mg 45%
	Potassium 235mg 6%
*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

» What's in a Name? Understanding Food Labels:

Organic: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) sets the rules for the labeling of organic foods sold in the US. Nearly any food sold can have this label: meat, milk, processed foods such as cereals, produce, beverages or condiments such as ketchup. This label means that the food contains 95% organic ingredients and is free from antibiotics, growth hormones, certain pesticides, biotechnology/GMO or irradiation. If a food has at least 70% organic ingredients, it can be labeled as "made with organic ingredients."



Certified Naturally Grown: Foods with this label follow the same standards for foods with an organic label, but come from farms that are not certified by the National Organic Program of the USDA. This is an alternative for farmers who believe the cost of organic certification is too high. Fellow farmers serve as inspectors on these farms to ensure procedures are followed for proper labeling. NOTE: Products labeled as "Natural" or "All Natural" do not undergo any certification and the term is used mostly as a marketing tool.



Non-GMO Project Verified: Many foods found on grocery store shelves have this label. It means that the Non-GMO Project, a non-profit organization, has verified that the foods with this label are biotech/GMO free. It is a best practice certification of biotech/GMO avoidance. The food is neither organic nor biotech/GMO; it comes from traditional farming practices. NOTE: Products with labels of "GE-Free" or "Non-GMO" are not certified or verified and the terms are marketing tools.



» What to Remember:

In the end, it is important to know that ALL food sold in the US meets strict safety standards and is constantly monitored for potential problems. None of these labels certify safety. They certify a type of farming practice. No claims can currently be made that organic or natural foods are safer or healthier than traditional or biotech/GMO foods. Food choice is personal. Foods need to fit your budget and be good for your health. It is key to remember that an organic apple has the same nutritional qualities as one from the orchard down the street or the unlabeled one for sale at your grocery store.



Grocery Shopping Guidelines

Adding nutritious foods to your meal plan begins at the grocery store. By following these grocery shopping guidelines, you will ensure you get the best food for your body. The grocery store can be great and tempting at the same time. It is full of wonderful, nutrient-rich foods and also contains pure junk food loaded with fat, sugar and salt. You must be smart when you enter a grocery store.

The first step is to start with a list. Before you even enter the store, prepare your shopping list. Planning ahead will decrease your likelihood of throwing foods into your cart that don't belong. Sit down for a moment before you go to the grocery and make a list of the foods you need for the week. Then shop from that list and don't let other foods make their way into your cart.

The majority of what you need will be in the perimeter of the store. Produce, meat and dairy line the edges of the store, and that's all you need! When you begin wondering around the aisles in the middle of the store, you may find cookies and chips ending up in your cart.

Whole Foods



Processed Foods



Whole Foods vs Processed Foods

Take a walk down the grocery store aisle and you will see dozens of high fiber bars, boxed mashed potatoes and fruit packaged in heavy syrup. While these items may be convenient to toss in your cart, are they really the best choices? Whole foods such as fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy and protein take a little more thought to prepare, but the benefits will outweigh the effort.

When choosing whole foods, remember that they keep their natural composition and do not have artificial additives or preservatives, and have gone through little or no processing. These foods contain vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, protein, fiber and much more. On the other hand, foods that have been processed likely have increased sugar, many additives (such as ascorbic acid, calcium sorbate, and sodium nitrite) and can be stripped of their nutritional value with processing.

Think about it for a minute. Your choice is a fresh peach or canned peaches. If you choose a fresh peach, you get... a fresh peach. If you choose the canned version, the ingredient list includes: peaches, high fructose corn syrup, corn syrup and sugar. Which do you think is the better choice?

Even though we live in a world with lots of conveniences, take an extra minute to scramble eggs for breakfast instead of having the frozen egg burrito, grab an apple for a snack instead of fruit snacks or make homemade mashed potatoes instead of potato flakes! The taste will be great and so will the nutritional benefits!

What Are Must Have Items to Add to Your Grocery List?



Produce: Fresh fruits and vegetables are always a must. Make it a goal to add many of these to your diet. There are so many ways to prepare and eat these vegetables. Choose a variety of veggies for a salad. Buy some leaf lettuce to use in place of bread or tortillas in wraps. Pick up a spaghetti squash to prepare on pasta nights instead of white pasta. Cucumbers can be sliced thin and used in place of crackers. A variety of fresh fruits can be blended for a smoothie. Try a low-fat fruit or veggie dip and serve it with fresh chopped produce. Think about convenience in this section. Pre-chopped fruits, veggies and bagged salad mix may be a little more expensive, but if paying for convenience means you will add these foods to your diet instead of keeping them whole in your refrigerator it is a good choice.



Meats/Proteins: Think lean when you choose these foods. Lean ground beef (90/10) is an excellent choice. Make sure you purchase skinless chicken or at the least, peel the skin off before cooking. Remember the word loin as you are in this section of the grocery store. Loin can mean it is a lean cut of meat-sirloin and pork loin are good choices. Eggs are a great source of protein, have them for breakfast or boil eggs for a snack. Nuts and seeds can make a great snack option as they are full of protein and good fats when eaten in moderation.



Frozen: Have some emergency meals on-hand. These can easily be found in the frozen food aisle of the grocery store. For example, frozen chicken breasts can easily be thawed and prepared when you don't have a dinner idea. Bagged frozen fruit or vegetables are also healthy and often low-cost choice to make sure there you always have options on-hand. Frozen veggie burgers are also a staple to add to your freezer.



Dairy: Adding low-fat dairy to your diet is a great way to get protein and calcium. It is best to choose low-fat cheese, cottage cheese, milk and yogurt when filling your grocery cart.



Grains: Whole grains are the way to go in this aisle. Choose whole grain pasta, brown rice, crackers or whole grain breads instead of their white flour counterparts. These choices will ensure your body gets the fiber it needs. Just be sure to check the ingredients and avoid bread products with added sugar.



Cereals: Resist the urge to purchase sweet, sugary cereals. Plain oatmeal can be a wonderful breakfast, so can a cereal that is high-fiber and low-sugar.



Snacks and Treats: Use moderation when choosing these items at the grocery store. Small quantities of these are okay in moderation. When you return home, package them in individual serving sizes so you don't overdo your portions.



YOUR CHOICES MATTER – DID YOU KNOW?



Reduced Fat Peanut Butter: This peanut butter has the same amount of calories as regular peanut butter. Yes, the fat is lower, but what do they use to make up the difference? Sugar! You're better off going with natural peanut butter and keeping your portion to two tablespoons.



Veggie Chips (found in the chip aisle): They look like chips, but they are marketed as veggies. What are they? The answer is fried veggies (mostly potato). That sure sounds a lot like chips and the calorie and fat content are very similar. A better idea? Try baked potato chips and keep it to one serving.



Sugar-free Chocolates: Oh these sound so delicious! Yes, these candies look low-calorie and delicious at the same time! Wow! Most people would think of it as a diet food and allow themselves one, or four! Did you know, calorically these provide the same amount of calories as the regular candies. What's the deal? The sugar in these candies is replaced with fat. You have a higher fat candy with the same calories. People tend to over-indulge in these because they look like a healthy food. These foods provide little nutritional value as well. What to do? Have the regular candy (just one) and work it into your plan occasionally.



Energy Drinks: These so called energy drinks typically contain nothing but added sugar, a small amount of vitamins, and some caffeine. They are packaged so nicely and look like a health drink. Take a closer look and you will see many of these drinks have more than 200 calories and 30-40 grams of sugar — sometimes more than a candy bar! A better bet is to drink water! It's the best way to hydrate. Take your multivitamin and you are set to make sure you are getting your needs met.



Eating Out

Did you know?

- A Big Mac has 550 calories.
- Some milkshakes from Steak and Shake have more than 900 calories for a regular size.
- A Bloomin' Onion appetizer has around 1900 calories.

Americans eat an average of more than four commercially-prepared meals per week nationwide; many eat out four to five times each month.

People eat out for various reasons. Some dine out for convenience, some for social reasons and some find it easier than cooking. Eating out can be part of a balanced diet if done in moderation and healthy choices and portions are chosen from the menu.

What Should You Eat When Eating Out?

	Eat This	Skip This
American Dining	Plain hamburger Side salad	Fried chicken sandwich French fries
Italian	Grilled chicken with marinara Whole wheat spaghetti with meat sauce	Lasagna Chicken parmesan
Mexican	Chicken fajitas Black beans Salad and salsa	Beef enchilada Refried beans Chips and cheese
Chinese	Chicken and Vegetables Beef and broccoli	Sweet & sour chicken White rice
Pizza	Thin-crust veggie pizza side salad with light dressing	Deep dish sausage pizza Garlic cheese bread

When choosing what to eat while dining out, remember these guidelines:

1. **WATCH** your portions. Most of them are larger than a serving. A good rule of thumb is to box-up half of what you ordered or ask a friend or family member to share with you.
2. **AVOID** fried foods, cheese sauces or full-fat dressings. The calories of these choices can add up quickly. For example, a plain hamburger topped with cheese, ranch dressing and bacon, can turn a 400 calorie hamburger into an 800 calorie hamburger.
3. **PREPARATION** is key! Let the server know **EXACTLY** how you want your entrée prepared. Let them know your specific preferences.
4. **KNOW** what you want to order before you walk in. It is easy to find menus online. Take a look and decide what you want to order before you enter the restaurant. Sometimes, if you don't ask for a menu you might not be tempted.
5. **SKIP** the appetizers, desserts and alcohol. All of these will add additional unwanted calories.

Cooking

Cooking... you either love it or you hate it. Either way, it is a necessary part of life and healthy living. It is important to prepare foods in a healthy way for maximum benefit.

Food Preparation: What's the best way to prepare food? There are many ways, but here are a few that work well with a healthy meal plan.

Baking and Broiling: These methods are a great option for most meats. Place your meat or vegetable on a pan and bake in the oven. Baking and broiling do not require the use of extra fat, keeping calorie and fat consumption within healthier levels.

Grilling: This method can be used all year long — even in the cold. Grilling your meat allows fat to drip off of the meat and into the grill. Grilling meats on an outside grill can be a great summertime favorite, but don't limit your grill to the summer! Think outside the box and grill vegetable kabobs, fish and even pineapple. When it gets cold, invest in an indoor grill or bundle up when you head outside to cook.

Crockpot: Crockpots are great for busy nights. Plan ahead and make chili, barbeque chicken or vegetable soup. The great thing about a crockpot is that you can turn it on in the morning, forget about it during the day and come home to a healthy dinner.

Instapot: Also known as a pressure cooker or multicooker (many can also be used as a rice cooker, crockpot or even a yogurt maker), Instapots are great for busy nights because they can cook many foods in about half the time needed with traditional methods.

Pan Frying and Sautéing: These methods use a small amount of fat (remember to use a healthier oil) in the bottom of a shallow pan or skillet. You can pan fry or sauté vegetables, meats or stir fry meals. These methods use much less oil and fat than traditional frying.

Air Fryers: This kitchen appliance has the ability to crisp foods like a traditional fryer without the large amount of butter or fat traditionally needed. Air fryers are essentially a mini-convection oven that can circulate hot air fast enough to fry foods.

Swap It Out!

When cooking, you can make many healthy and creative substitutions to boost the nutritional value of foods or lower the fat content. That's the great part about cooking. It's up to you to choose what foods you want and how to prepare it. When you choose packaged foods or eat out, you generally do not know the exact ingredients and have little control over how your food is prepared.

Be Smart, Make the Swap!

Instead of...

Whole milk
Cheese
Sour cream
Bacon
Hamburger
Egg
Dried breadcrumbs
Oil
Sugar
White flour
White flour
Pasta
Mashed potatoes
Tortilla
Rice
Salt

Try this...

1% or skim milk
Reduced-fat cheese
Plain non-fat greek yogurt
Canadian bacon or turkey bacon
Lean ground beef
2 egg whites or 1/4 cup substitute
Rolled oats
Use half amount and half of a fruit puree
Cut the amount by 1/3
Whole wheat flour
1 cup black bean puree for one cup flour
Spaghetti squash
Mashed cauliflower
Lettuce wrap
Quinoa
Garlic powder



» Spice it Up!




Seasonings are an important part of meal preparation. Seasonings can turn a plain chicken breast into something delicious very quickly. Stock your cabinets with a few basic spices and seasonings for a cooking success.

Add Some Flavor:



Spice	Try it on this...
Basil	Tomato dishes, pesto and marinades
Celery seed	Salads and dressings
Chili powder	Chili, stews and ground meats
Cilantro	Salads, sauces, dressings and soups
Curry	Meats, vegetables, fish and rice
Mint	Fruit, teas, soups and sauces
Oregano	Italian and Mexican dishes
Thyme	Soup, sauces, meats and poultry

Now it's time to work on making cooking easy and convenient for your lifestyle. Although we have reviewed menu planning techniques, consider the following before you begin to cook:

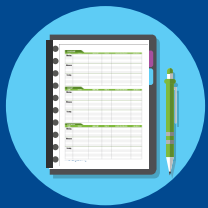
- 
1. Have emergency meals on-hand: These meals are ones your family likes and that you can cook in an instant without a recipe card. Everyone needs these "go to" meals for busy nights.
- 
2. Have some "no-cook" meal options: Who says you have to use a stove? Making chicken salad or using leftover grilled meat on a bed of greens are healthy choices.
- 
3. Stay organized: When you find something that works, use it again! The best way to do this is to keep a file (on your computer or in a recipe box) of all the things that work well. When you're not sure what to make, look in your files for a good recipe.

Putting it All Together

Earlier in this guide, we talked about changing your behaviors when it comes to self-monitoring, exercise and more. Following a nutritional plan also requires behavior changes. It is time to begin making small changes to your nutritional plan to improve your weight and health. Sometimes making changes can be overwhelming, but with a little planning it does not have to be!



Here are a few tips to try:



Use a Food Journal: Begin keeping a food journal. This can be difficult to start, but is a wonderful tool to begin evaluating your diet for change as well as being accountable. When you log your food choices, you can begin to see patterns of when you are struggling with food choices, eating out of boredom or not planning ahead. For tips on using a food journal, see page 49.

Set Small Goals: No one can change overnight. It does take time to make changes stick. By starting slowly, people can make one or two changes, see success and then build on that success. For example, you may start by purchasing low-fat dairy products and eating breakfast every day. After you make these changes and are successful with them, you are able to move on to new goals. Over time, your diet will change for the better!



Eat Three Meals Per Day: Food is fuel. Your body needs this energy as you go through the day. Choose to eat three meals per day and balance those meals about five hours apart. Many people make the mistake of skipping meals. When you skip meals, you tend to overdo it at the next meal. This can lead to poor energy throughout the day and weight gain.

Eat Slowly and Mindfully: The world is fast-paced and it's time to slow down, take your time and enjoy your foods. Chew your food, put your fork down between bites and really listen to your body to realize when you are full. You'll find you'll eat less and enjoy your food more.

Get the Support You Need: Making changes can be difficult for everyone. Find someone to hold you accountable, share recipes with and keep you motivated on your path to long-term health.



Expect Some Setbacks: When changing your diet, you will have setbacks – plan for them. The problem with setbacks is when people use them as an excuse to quit. No one is perfect, if you make a mistake, get right back on the plan. You'll be happy you did.

Enjoy Your Success: Celebrate the small changes you make. When you reach one of your goals, do something special. Reward yourself for the changes you have made. Do something you enjoy like read a good book, go to a movie or buy a new scarf. These can all be ways to celebrate.

SECTION 4

MANAGING YOUR WEIGHT & HEALTH

A wide variety of weight management and treatment options exist. It can be confusing to know where to begin, but it is often best to have a combination of methods in your weight management plan. There is no single best treatment option and your healthcare provider will work with you to select lifestyle modifications and other weight management tools.

Please Note: Before starting any weight management plan, please see your healthcare professional. Together you can discuss options and select the ones that best fit you and your lifestyle.

We have discussed lifestyle modifications and nutrition, in this section we will discuss:

- » Community-based programs
- » Commercial weight management options
- » Prescription medicine and other options



Community-based Programs

Community-based programs can be an excellent way for you to learn from others dealing with weight or weight-related issues. They can also be a good source of motivation that will help keep you accountable. The programs mentioned in this section are not all-inclusive (they do not include meals), and it might be good to try out several programs in your area to find the best fit.

TOPS CLUB INC. (TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY)

Founded in 1948, TOPS is the original non-profit weight-loss support group. TOPS does not sell foods, endorse products, promote quick fixes or push a one-size-fits-all meal plan. TOPS provides members in thousands of chapters across the U.S. and Canada with the information and support needed to make healthy lifestyle changes they can enjoy for a lifetime.



How does it work? No foods are required, and none are off limits. When it comes to healthy eating, TOPS advocates portion control and balanced eating within two healthy frameworks: the USDA's MyPlate, and the Food Exchange System developed by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and the American Diabetes Association. Many dietitians use these same frameworks for teaching healthy eating.

TOPS offers tools, tips and meal planning ideas for using MyPlate and the Exchange System in its membership magazine and other materials. Members are encouraged to move more and eat a greater variety of healthy foods in smaller portions as well as change habits and thinking patterns with the aid of weekly group support. Weekly TOPS meetings, led by volunteers, focus on making small, steady lifestyle changes that provide lasting weight-loss and better health. Each meeting includes a confidential weigh-in so members can stay accountable to the scale, a brief educational program on nutrition, fitness, health or behavior change, and an opportunity to share challenges and successes from the previous week if the

members are urged to consult with their healthcare provider to set a realistic, healthy goal weight and a calorie level that is safe, effective and sustainable.

The first visit to any chapter is free. The annual cost to join TOPS is \$32 for chapter or online membership. Chapter members also pay local chapter dues, which vary by community but average \$5 or less per month. Fee and chapter dues cover the costs of weekly weigh-ins and meetings, chapter materials, subscription to the magazine, a quick-start guide and online tools. Support online includes facilitated online chat (for online only members), recipes and self-care program as well as online weight and exercise trackers.



Weight-loss: TOPS stands for “Take Off Pounds Sensibly.” The organization advocates slow, steady weight-loss using techniques and small behavior changes that members can naturally incorporate into their day and keep for a lifetime. A 2010 university study of 42,500 TOPS members found that those staying in TOPS for three years were able to maintain their weight-loss throughout that time and lost as much weight as dieters using popular commercial weight-loss programs.



Concerns: TOPS can’t do the work for you. You only get out of TOPS what you put into it. Regular attendance and participation in a local chapter (or online community) are necessary for success. Each chapter tends to take on its own personality, reflecting the ages, backgrounds and interests of its members. Finding a local chapter that is a “fit” for your personality and schedule is important.

YMCA DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAM

As a leading nonprofit organization for strengthening community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility, the Y believes that all people should be able to live life to its fullest, healthiest potential. In the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program, a trained lifestyle coach will introduce topics in a supportive, small group environment and encourage participants as they explore how healthy eating, physical activity and behavior changes can benefit their health.



How does it work? The 12-month group-based program consists of 16 one-hour, weekly sessions, followed by monthly sessions led by a trained lifestyle coach who facilitates a small group of people with similar goals. You will discuss topics such as healthy eating, increasing physical activity, reducing stress, problem solving and much more. The Program will also help you stay motivated to maintain progress toward program goals with monthly maintenance sessions.




Weight-loss: Based on research funded by the National Institutes of Health, the Program has been shown to reduce the number of new cases of type 2 diabetes by as much as 58%. The reduction was even greater, 71%, among adults aged 60 years or older. Diabetes Prevention Program goals include:

- Lose 7% of your body weight.
- Gradually increase your physical activity to 150 minutes per week.

The program states that you will accomplish these goals by eating healthy, increasing physical activity and losing weight.

- **Healthy Eating** – Eating smaller portions, reducing fat in your diet and discovering healthier food options have been proven to help prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes.

- **Increasing Physical Activity** – Studies have repeatedly shown that moderate physical activity (walking, swimming, mowing the lawn) for as little as 30 minutes, five days a week can help improve your blood pressure, raise your good cholesterol and prevent blood flow problems.
- **Losing Weight** – It has been shown that reducing your body weight by even a small amount can offer tremendous benefits for people at risk for diabetes.

 **Concerns:** As with all support-based programs, you must take part in the program to experience the results. The main focus of this program is to prevent diabetes; however, weight is also addressed as weight and diabetes are related. You must also be diagnosed with prediabetes to enter the program.

Commercial Weight Management Options

There are hundreds of commercial weight management products and programs to choose from. It can be hard to know where to start.

Commercial weight management products and programs not offered through a healthcare provider are called non-clinical. Non-clinical methods vary greatly and can include everything from diet books to supplements to commercial weight management programs that might include meal replacements. Some of these options may require you to buy and use the program’s foods or supplements. There may also be fees for professional services or devices.



Non-Clinical Weight Management Options:

- WW
- Health coaches
- Meal-replacement items
- Diet books
- Body monitoring devices such as Fitbit Alta™ or Bodybugg™
- Websites such as **noom.com** and **SparkPeople.com**
- Support groups
- Apps such as Lark™ and MyFitnessPal
- Over-the-counter (OTC) medications such as alli™
- Meal replacement systems such as Jenny Craig and Nutrisystem



Equal to the number of options available in this category of weight management are the types of claims they make. It is important to remember that not all methods and claims are reviewed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The FDA is responsible for making sure products are safe and effective. They review all medical devices as well as medications whether they are over-the-counter or prescription. They do not review supplements advertised for weight management or diet books.

Is this Claim Reasonable?

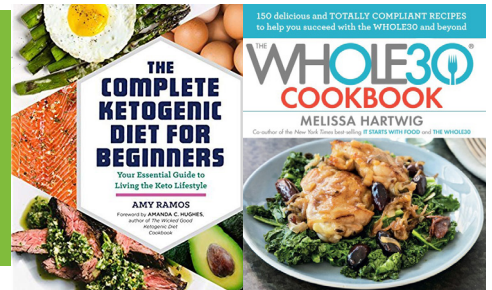
Claim	Reasonable	Not Reasonable
Lose 1-2 pounds per week!	✓	
Have a bikini body in 30 days!		✓
This miracle pill will dissolve your fat away!		✓

A good rule of thumb is: if a product or claim sounds too good to be true, it usually is.

A reasonable goal is to lose about a pound or two each week. For many people, that means consuming 500 fewer calories per day as well as exercising and eating more nutritious foods. If a weight management option claims greater weight-loss per week, avoid it.

DIET BOOKS

Diet books have been published since the mid-19th century. While not many have never been proven effective, the market for an at-home guide to weight management has lasted. They are easy to find, promise results and are usually very affordable.



Popular Diet Books Include:

- “The Complete Ketogenic Diet for Beginners” by Amy Ramos
- “The Whole 30” (any in the series) by Melissa and Dallas Hartwig
- “The Obesity Code” by Dr. Jason Fung
- “The Plant Paradox” by Dr. Steven Gundry
- “The Lose Your Belly Diet” by Travis Stork



How Do They Work? Diet books are fairly simple, straight forward and affordable. You select a book at a store or at the library and follow the rules. Most do not require special foods or tools. Many follow a combination of a change in diet (reducing calories, cutting out foods or food groups) paired with self-monitoring and exercise. The cost is about the same as you would have spent on food they currently eat from the grocery store.

Authors of diet books are very good at putting what you want to hear into words. They make money from selling their books. If they can make a plan seem easy, quick and long-lasting; it could be a best-seller. *The New York Times* even has a best seller list just for food and diet books.



Weight Management: Weight-loss and management depends on your ability to follow the program outlined in the book. If you find it to be something you can easily follow, you may experience a one or two pound loss per week.




Concerns: While many diet books have some merit, most do not offer real, long-lasting lifestyle change options. The majority of people follow the plans for a month or two.

Following a plan from a diet book usually means that you are making lifestyle changes on your own. This can be difficult. The more weight you aim to lose and the more health concerns you are dealing with can make it harder to be successful in long-term weight management. No matter your health and weight status, it is best to talk with your healthcare provider before beginning any weight management plan. You can discuss the pros and cons of different plans with them.


ONLINE/WEBSITE/APP-BASED DIET PROGRAMS


Similar to diet books, website and app-based diet programs come in many versions. Some are free, while some charge a fee. Some require a body-monitoring device, some do not. Some are nutritionally sound and others are not.



 **How Do They Work?** Some websites and apps are digital versions of their programs (WeightWatchers.com) or books (Whole30.com) while others are full courses with an online support structure (Noom.com). These options are popular and usually offer:

- Simple tools such as recipes, meal ideas and tips for eating out
- Workout and sleep tracking
- Food journal or calorie counting options
- Forums and discussion boards to provide support and an idea community
- Add-on options for personal counseling or prepared meal delivery

 **Weight Management:** Depending on your ability to follow the set program, you can experience a one to two pound weight-loss per week.

 **Concerns:** Similar to diet books, digital-based diet programs are self-monitored. These work well for some, but are not for everyone. Most diet books and digital-based programs offer flexible options in weight management that allow you to shop for your own food at the grocery store, which many people prefer. As with all diet options, it is best to talk with your healthcare provider before you begin one. You may have nutritional or health needs that will not fit with all programs.



COMMERCIAL WEIGHT-LOSS CENTERS AND PROGRAMS

Choosing a commercial weight-loss center or program is one of the most popular options for someone wanting to manage their weight. These options usually provide resources such as pre-packaged meals, support and more. They also traditionally use a 1,000 to 1,500 calorie-per-day diet plan, which can provide quick weight-loss results. However, as weight-loss slows down, it is easy for some people to get frustrated and discouraged or regain weight after they leave the program.

Before starting any commercial program, ask the following questions to a program representative:

- How much, on average, do clients regain long-term?
- What is your maintenance and follow-up program?
- What rate of weight-loss does your program aim for?
- Does the program emphasize balanced food choices and exercise?
- Are you required to buy specially formulated foods or supplements?
- What are the costs of membership, weekly fees, brand food, supplements and counseling?
- What are the credentials of those running the program?
- What are the health risks?



Commercial programs usually fit into one of two categories — those that use a meal replacement plan and those that do not. Here is a closer look into the two options:

Meal Replacement Plans:	Non-Meal Replacement Plans:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participants purchase and eat pre-portioned meals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participants eat meals made at home from ingredients bought at the grocery store.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Faster initial weight-loss, but harder to maintain long term and once you leave the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slower initial weight-loss, but easier to maintain long term.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Convenient, but can also be expensive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Costs and effort similar to traditional meal planning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does not teach the basics of healthy eating and nutrition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teaches the basics of healthy eating and nutrition.

Commercial Weight-loss Programs that Use Meal Replacements

NUTRISYSTEM

Nutrisystem is a provider of health and wellness and weight management products and services, and has helped millions of people lose weight over the course of more than 45 years. Nutrisystem offers safe, effective and scientifically-backed weight-loss plans, with a distinguished Science Advisory Board and strong clinical studies.





Nutrisystem plans provide frozen and shelf-stable pre-packaged, portion-controlled meals and snacks delivered to your home. All Nutrisystem plans include comprehensive support and counseling options from trained weight-loss coaches and certified diabetes educators, accessible seven days a week via chat, email or telephone.


Nutrisystem features portion-controlled meals and structured reduced-calorie meal plans that are high in protein and fiber to help keep you feeling full throughout the day. All meal plans align with national guidelines for total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, carbohydrates, fiber, protein and added sugars.

All plans can be customized to specific dietary needs and preferences, including the Nutrisystem D® program for people living with type 2 diabetes or prediabetes. Once you have reached your weight-loss goal, Nutrisystem offers transition programs to help you continue to follow the portion-controlled principles of the Nutrisystem program while adding back more of your own foods.

All foods in the Nutrisystem portfolio have been reformulated to contain no artificial flavors or sweeteners and about 120 menu items are free of artificial preservatives.

 **How does it work?** Nutrisystem plans, tailored for men and women, encourage you to consume three meals and two or three snacks per day. The plans offer about 150 items from its highly rated menu of ready-to-go and fresh frozen options. Foods are home-delivered, typically in shipments every four weeks, after you place an order online or over-the-phone. Often fruits, vegetables, lean proteins and dairy products are added to the meal plan – those you select and purchase as needed. Foods are grouped into three categories: SmartCarbs (nutrient-rich, high-fiber carbohydrates), PowerFuels (lean proteins and healthy fats) and Vegetables (non-starchy ones, which can be eaten freely). Each week, you will also get to include Flex™ meals (one breakfast, one lunch, one dinner and one to two snacks) that you either prepare on your own or have when dining out. Flex™ meals allow you to add flexibility into your program while still following the Nutrisystem meal plan guidelines. A meal planner explains how and when to add these foods and Flex™ meals into your diet. In addition to the Nutrisystem meal plan, you are encouraged to complete three 10-minute bouts of exercise each day, known as My Daily 3. Counseling, for those who want it, is available and included with all Nutrisystem programs. Nutrisystem offers a free tracking app NuMi as a seamless companion to the Nutrisystem program complete with a barcode scanner for easy tracking, a newsfeed offering daily tips and inspiration, and videos and recipes from The Leaf, the Nutrisystem lifestyle blog.

 **Weight-loss:** With the recommended fruits, vegetables and dairy products, this program is considered a well-balanced approach to weight-loss. In a clinical study, participants on the Nutrisystem plan lost an average of 11.6 pounds in their first four weeks. The average results of two clinical studies on the Nutrisystem D® program showed that participants living with diabetes lost an average of 14 pounds at three months and reduced their A1C by 1.02%.

 **Concerns:** Participants using pre-packaged meals may need additional help to learn good nutrition, which makes maintaining weight-loss difficult once they return to buying or preparing food on their own. In 2011, Nutrisystem began to address this with “transition and maintenance” plans that reduce the number of on-program meals and increase the customer’s preparing and choosing healthy meals in the proper portions. More recently, Flex™ meals were introduced into the program, providing the opportunity to teach consumers how to prepare their own perfectly portioned, balanced meals and snacks to support a lifelong healthy lifestyle. Counselors are also available throughout the program and during transition and maintenance to educate about maintaining good eating habits during the program and on your own. And, Nutrisystem provides the free NuMi app to help customers continue to self-monitor their food intake and physical activity even after they have reached their weight-loss goal.

Membership is free and programs cost about \$230-\$350 for a 28-day package, depending on your order preferences. This does not include the additional fruits, vegetables and other food that you supplement. Although Nutrisystem claims that the full cost of eating while on the program is about 15 to 40% less than what the average American spends on food, some consumers would rather buy food week-to-week, rather than once a month. Some employers and health plans subsidize or reimburse program costs.

JENNY CRAIG

Founded 35 years ago, the Jenny Craig program is designed to provide structure and support to help members lose weight and learn how to keep it off. Jenny Craig's program provides nutritionally-balanced menus, which include around 100 delicious entrées, desserts and snacks developed by dietitians, nutritionists, and professional chefs.



At Jenny Craig, personal support is a cornerstone of the program. Dedicated consultants who have gone through in-depth training provide one-on-one personal support and education on portion control and strategies such as utilizing Fresh and Free Additions, which helps with satiety. Jenny Craig consultants work with each member individually to identify their strengths, challenges and personal goals to create unique weekly meal and activity plans that fit individual needs. Consultants also help members implement behavioral strategies to support their success. Jenny Craig's comprehensive approach to weight-loss is available to members either in person, in centers or by phone or video chat with Jenny Craig Anywhere. The program is backed by hard science as demonstrated by a 2010 independent two-year clinical trial published in the Journal of the American Medical Association showing that participants on the Jenny Craig program lost three times more weight than dieting on their own. Jenny Craig, based in Carlsbad, California, is one of the world's largest weight-loss and weight management companies, with approximately 500 company-owned and franchised locations in local neighborhoods in the United States and Canada, and approximately 600 centers worldwide.



How does it work? Jenny Craig members eat six times a day. A typical menu on Jenny Craig consists of three Jenny Craig meals and three snacks per day in combination with the member's added grocery items, such as fresh fruits and vegetables and low-fat dairy. Members can still eat their favorite foods, there is no need to eliminate any food groups. No cooking or meal prep required.

The Jenny Craig Program reflects the key recommendations of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines to achieve a healthy eating pattern and active lifestyle to reduce risk and attain a healthy weight. The menu plan is based upon the member's caloric needs, taking into account the member's gender, age, height, weight and level of physical activity.

The menus offer around 100 items and provide less than 10% calories from saturated fat and added sugars and 0 grams trans-fat.

There are several program options to fit specific needs: The Classic Jenny Craig menu, Jenny Craig for type 2 diabetes, and their new Rapid Results program, which leverages the body clock's natural circadian rhythm to help optimize metabolism and accelerate weight loss.

During the weight-loss part of the program, members follow menus that include Jenny Craig foods for seven days a week. For special events or other times when members need an alternate option, consultants offer guidance for meals on their own. When a member reaches their goal weight, they transition to their own foods with the help of their consultant, and have the option to continue with one meal/snack per day to maintain consistent calories for more successful weight maintenance through our maintenance program. Throughout the program, members meet with their consultant to utilize behavioral strategies to address challenges like emotional, social and unconscious eating and dining out as well as to build an enjoyable, active lifestyle. The program also provides recipes using Fresh and Free additions and helpful blog articles for added support.



Weight-loss: Jenny Craig is a well-balanced, scientifically proven program on which you can expect to lose one to two pounds per week on average. A 2010 independent trial, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, demonstrated a 10% weight-loss for Jenny Craig participants at one year and seven percent weight-loss at two years. A 2015 study conducted by researchers at Johns Hopkins University and published in *Annals of Internal Medicine*, one of the most widely-cited peer-reviewed medical journals in the world, suggests that doctors consider recommending Jenny Craig's weight-loss solution to their patients.

Jenny Craig was identified as one of the most effective weight-loss programs based on evidence that its participants achieved greater weight-loss at 12 months, relative to control groups. A 2014 clinical trial of people with type 2 diabetes, demonstrated a 9% weight-loss at one year with greater improvements in diabetes control and heart risk factors as compared to usual care. Jenny Craig's Type 2 Diabetes Guide has been favorably reviewed by The American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE).

Jenny Craig's newest program, Rapid Results™, is a science-based innovation that leverages research on the body clock's circadian rhythm which was awarded the 2017 Nobel Prize in Physiology/Medicine. Based on a Jenny Craig pilot study, members can lose up to 16 pounds during their first four weeks. The average weight-loss was 11.6 pounds for those who completed the study.



Concerns: From the beginning, members are learning how to incorporate healthy foods (a variety of non-starchy vegetables, reduced/nonfat dairy products, whole grains and heart healthy fats) into their menus. The daily menu is a model for learning nutritional balance, variety and moderation in food choices. For long-term weight management, it's important to utilize the tools learned from the program and build healthy habits such as self-monitoring of food choices and behavioral strategies as well as engaging in physical activity.


Consultants are not dietitians; however, they have been trained to deliver an evidence-based program that is developed by registered dietitians as is recommended by the 2013 Obesity Guidelines. Jenny Craig offers three standard types of memberships: As You Go, Premium and Super Premium (available In Center and through Jenny Craig Anywhere). Food costs vary but are approximately \$20 a day for three entrées and two snacks.

SLIM-FAST (Available in supermarkets, grocery stores and pharmacies)


Slim-Fast has been around for more than 40 years and offers relatively quick weight-loss by substituting a calorie-controlled, sweet-tasting fortified meal replacement shake or bar for some of your regular meals. The program offers online support that includes weight, diet and exercise charting, chat rooms with online buddies, chat sessions with registered dietitians, a weekly newsletter, exercise programs and meal planning.


Slim-Fast offers several plan options including Traditional, Keto, Advanced Nutrition and Diabetic Weight Loss. They also offer coffee drinks, supplements and bakery items.



 **How does it work?** The diet plan is centered on two Slim-Fast meal replacements. One meal consists of a “Meal-on-the-Go” shake or bar and the other is a similar shake or bar combined with 200 calories of your favorite healthy foods. The third meal is a “sensible meal” of about 500 calories, with 1/2 of your plate filled with veggies, 1/4 with lean protein (such as chicken without the skin), 1/4 with starch, a salad on the side and fruit for dessert. A snack of 120 calories is also offered during the day. Fruits and vegetables (about three to five servings) are encouraged in addition to the meals and snack.

As dieters approach their weight maintenance phase, they can replace the shakes or bars with two additional “sensible meals;” however, Slim-Fast provides little instruction on transitioning from portion-controlled products back to regular foods, an omission which is likely to leave dieters struggling to maintain their weight-loss or relying on Slim-Fast products indefinitely.

 **Weight-loss:** Overall, if followed correctly, the plan does encourage additional fruits and vegetables and it stays at or above 1,200 calories a day, leading to more balanced consumption than traditional liquid diets. Meal replacement diets such as Slim-Fast are appealing because of their simplicity and convenience. If you plan to use Slim-Fast, you should consider doing so under the supervision of a healthcare professional, who can help teach you how to transition yourself from the shakes and who can monitor you for potential complications of fast weight-loss.


 **Concerns:** The shakes are about \$1.75 and the meal replacement bars and bakery items cost about \$1 to \$2 each. The biggest drawback is that dieters may not receive comprehensive information about nutrition, which means that as they transition back to regular foods, which they are likely to do eventually, weight gain may be inevitable. Also, the recommended calorie level may be too low for some dieters.

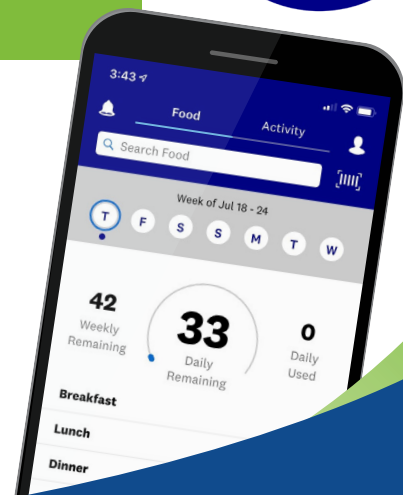
Commercial Weight-loss Programs that Do NOT Use Meal Replacements

WW

WW is a global wellness company and the world’s leading commercial weight management program. WW inspires millions of people to adopt healthy habits for real life. Through WW’s engaging digital experience and face-to-face group meetings, members follow a livable and sustainable program that encompasses healthy eating, physical activity and positive mindset.



 **How does it work?** The WW program, WW Freestyle™, builds on the successful SmartPoints® plan and gives you more flexibility than ever before. WW Freestyle gives you the freedom to eat – without tracking or measuring – from a robust list of delicious, satisfying foods and still successfully lose weight. While everything is on the menu with WW, the WW Freestyle program features an expanded list of more than 200 zero points foods, including: eggs, corn, all fish, all seafood, skinless chicken breast, skinless turkey breast, non-fat plain yogurt, beans, peas, lentils and tofu.



As part of the new program, the SmartPoints system encourages a healthier pattern of eating and is consistent with the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The SmartPoints system translates complex nutrition information into one simple number, giving each food and beverage a SmartPoints value based on calories, saturated fat, sugar and protein. You are given a personalized Daily SmartPoints target based on your height, weight, age and gender and also receive a Weekly SmartPoints target. For even more flexibility, up to four unused SmartPoints each day automatically rollover for you to use as you wish on another day.

With more than five decades of experience in building communities and WW's deep expertise in behavioral science, WW aims to deliver wellness for all. In addition to eating what you love, WW Freestyle helps you move more in a way that fits your lifestyle, as well as learn the skills and techniques to shift your mindset, strengthen your resilience and keep yourself motivated. Additionally, WW tools such as Connect — a social media community within its app — provides you with a safe space to talk about your journey through a community of likeminded members.

You can follow the program in-person at weekly group meetings and/or digitally. For more information, please visit WeightWatchers.com.



Weight-loss: WW inspires and guides members toward a healthier pattern of living; by following the program, members can expect to lose one to two pounds per week. WW is one of the few programs whose ability to produce weight-loss has been clinically proven repeatedly through research studies. WW has multiple subscription options: a Monthly Pass subscription to its Meetings offering has base rate of \$44.95/month and OnlinePlus has a base rate of \$19.95/month (prices may vary). There is also a starter fee of \$20.00 to join; applicable taxes vary by state. These two offerings include access to the WW app, which includes Connect.



Concerns: While Leaders have lived the experience (all Leaders have lost weight on WW and kept it off) and are trained in behavioral methods to support weight-loss, they are not licensed dietitians. Therefore, if there are special dietary requirements, it is always best to consult with a dietitian. Another concern is that foods that are zero in point value – which WW describes as having been selected because they have a low risk of being overeaten and form the foundation of a healthy eating pattern – can have as much as 60-230 calories in them, so it is important to eat these in moderation.

Prescription Medicine and Other Options

As we've stated throughout this guide, there's no one-size-fits-all approach for weight-loss. Many of the programs mentioned in this guide, along with behavioral and nutritional changes, have helped people find success. What works for one person may not work for someone else.

Today, there are FDA-approved prescription medications that are designed to help with chronic weight management. There are also surgical options, often called bariatric or weight-loss surgery. These options have been evaluated by the FDA and are science-based. Your healthcare provider may want them in your treatment plan and will talk with you about their risks and benefits. These options do not replace healthy eating and physical activity. They are taken along with lifestyle and behavioral modifications. Your provider might also encourage you to see a dietitian or exercise physiologist to help make lifestyle modifications that will work for you. For additional information on prescription medicine and medical weight management options, please read the OAC's *Understanding Your Obesity Treatments* Brochure found in the Resource Library section of ObesityAction.org.

Ready to Talk to Your Healthcare Provider?

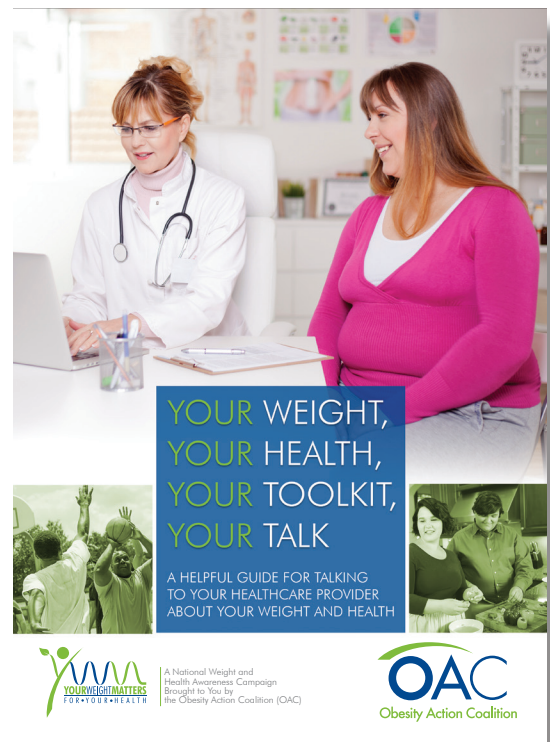
Before you talk to your healthcare provider, consider taking the *Your Weight Matters* Campaign challenge. By taking the challenge, you'll measure your weight and see if it is impacting your health. You will also learn more about how to prepare yourself for the discussion of weight with your healthcare provider.

By taking the challenge, you'll take the first step in taking charge of your weight and health, and we'll provide you with a variety of FREE resources to help you along the way, such as:

- A FREE *Your Weight Matters* Campaign Toolkit that discusses weight and health, nutrition, your weight-loss options, how to start the conversation about weight with your healthcare provider and more!

To take the Challenge today, visit YourWeightMatters.org!

If you've already talked to your provider and are currently treating your obesity, we encourage you to keep this guide to help you along your journey toward improved health!



TOOLS FOR STAYING ON TRACK WITH YOUR HEALTH & WEIGHT GOALS

Your body is very complex, knowing the best way to get it what it needs to be healthy and be the right amount for weight-loss or maintenance can be tricky. In this section we will provide tips on:

- » Setting realistic goals
- » Food Journals and activity trackers
- » Understanding your BMI

Speak to a Dietitian

Dietitians are an excellent resource for an individual wanting to lose weight and improve health. Quite often, we think we know what's healthy for our bodies, but we are commonly mistaken. Dietitians can provide you with the following:

- Meal plans
- Information on foods and how they impact your weight and health
- Help developing nutritional goals

Set Realistic Goals

When developing your goals for weight-loss, exercise, healthy eating and more, keep them realistic. Quite often, individuals become frustrated when they do not see immediate weight-loss results. Do not let yourself become frustrated with your weight-loss plan. Changing your diet, incorporating exercise and more can all be significant life changes and they need to be taken seriously. Here are a few tips for developing realistic goals:

- ✓ **Aim for a safe weight-loss of one to two pounds per week.**
- ✓ **Start slow with exercise and find an activity you enjoy.**
- ✓ **Ask your spouse, family member or friend to exercise with you.**
- ✓ **Make meal times a family affair. Have your children help with cooking & let them choose healthy foods as well.**
- ✓ **Recognize your progress. Continue a proactive mindset and remember that each day is another day forward.**
- ✓ **Don't be afraid to ask for help. Feel like you might be slipping with your eating or exercise routine? Talk to a family member, friend or healthcare professional and they'll help you get back on track.**

Food Journals and Activity Trackers

Food Journals

What you eat and drink is an important part of healthy eating and weight management. It is not just about total calories. How often you eat and how many calories you drink per day are things you may not typically think about. Writing down why you are eating or drinking will also be key. It can lead to a natural pause before you eat or drink that can allow you to question if you are hungry or eating for another reason. Food journals can be apps on your phone or written down on paper. Below is a suggested way to organize a food journal on paper.



Important things to remember when filling out your Food Journal:

- Be honest. It will help you and your provider better understand your eating habits.
- Include all food, even midnight snacks and desserts.
- Include all drinks. Water and diet soda may not have calories, but they are important to track. Juices and sweetened teas do have calories and need to be counted too.

Activity Trackers

You've learned that it's important to be active and get moving! Use this activity tracker to keep track of your daily activities, favorite exercises and how you felt after can help you learn which exercises you enjoy the most and can keep long-term.

Like food journals, activity trackers can be digital apps or charts on paper. Be sure to note your activity, how long you exercised, the intensity of your work-out and how you felt during and after exercising.

SUNDAY					
TIME	FOOD	AMOUNT	PLACE	HUNGER/REASON	CALORIES
Morning	2 eggs and toast		Kitchen table	Hungry	450
	Orange juice	1/2 cup			
	Berries	1 cup			
	Skim milk				
Afternoon	Chicken and rice	3 ounces	Office	Hungry	430
	Salad				
	Fresh fruit	1 cup			
	Skim milk				
Evening	Roast beef	3 ounces	Kitchen table	Hungry	460
	Baked potato and green beans				
	Dinner roll with butter	Small roll, 1 tsp. butter			
	Water				

Understanding Your BMI

Body fat is hard to measure directly, so it is often measured by body mass index (BMI). BMI measures weight related to height. It is a common way to measure body fat and is one tool healthcare providers use when talking about weight.

Before visiting your healthcare provider, take a moment to find your BMI on the chart below:

Weight in Pounds

	130	140	150	160	170	180	190	200	210	220	230	240	250
5'0"	25	27	29	31	33	35	37	39	41	43	45	47	49
5'1"	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	37	39	42	44	45	47
5'2"	23	25	27	29	31	33	34	36	38	40	42	44	46
5'3"	23	24	26	28	30	32	33	35	37	39	41	43	44
5'4"	22	24	25	27	29	31	32	34	36	38	40	41	43
5'5"	21	23	25	26	28	30	31	33	35	37	38	40	42
5'6"	21	22	24	25	27	29	30	32	34	36	37	39	40
5'7"	20	22	23	25	26	28	29	31	33	35	36	38	39
5'8"	19	21	22	24	25	27	28	30	32	34	35	37	38
5'9"	19	20	22	23	25	26	28	29	31	33	34	36	37
5'10"	18	20	21	23	24	25	27	28	30	32	33	35	36
5'11"	18	19	21	22	23	25	26	28	29	31	32	34	35
6'0"	17	19	20	21	23	24	25	27	28	30	31	33	34
6'1"	17	18	19	21	22	23	25	26	27	29	30	32	33
6'2"	16	18	19	20	21	23	24	25	27	28	30	31	32
6'3"	16	17	18	19	21	22	23	24	26	28	29	30	31
6'4"	15	17	18	19	20	21	23	24	26	27	28	29	31
6'5"	15	16	17	19	20	21	22	24	25	26	27	29	30

Underweight = Less than 18.4

Normal = 18.5 - 24.9

Overweight = 25 - 29.9

DATE														
BMI														

260	270	280	290	300	310	320	330	340	350	360	370	380	390	400
51	53	55	57	59	61	63	65	67	69	71	72	74	76	78
49	51	53	55	57	59	61	63	64	66	68	70	72	74	76
48	50	51	53	55	57	59	61	62	64	66	68	70	72	73
46	48	50	52	53	55	57	59	60	62	64	66	67	69	71
45	46	48	50	52	53	55	57	59	60	62	64	65	67	69
43	45	47	48	50	52	53	55	57	58	60	62	63	65	67
42	44	45	47	49	50	52	53	55	57	58	60	62	63	65
41	42	44	46	47	49	50	52	53	55	57	58	60	61	63
40	41	43	44	46	47	49	50	52	53	55	56	58	59	61
39	40	41	43	44	46	47	49	50	52	53	55	56	58	59
37	39	40	42	43	45	46	47	49	50	52	53	55	56	58
36	38	39	41	42	43	45	46	48	49	50	52	53	55	56
35	37	38	39	41	42	44	45	46	48	49	50	52	53	54
34	36	37	38	39	41	42	44	45	46	48	49	50	52	53
33	35	36	37	39	40	41	42	44	45	46	48	49	50	51
33	34	35	36	38	39	40	41	43	44	45	46	48	49	50
32	33	34	35	37	38	39	40	41	43	44	45	46	48	49
31	32	33	34	36	37	38	39	40	42	43	44	45	46	48

Obesity = 30 - 39.9

Severe Obesity = Greater than 40

Health Notes

Please use this section to write down notes about your health. You can use this section to capture information such as lab results, favorite exercises, thoughts, goals and much more.

Healthcare Provider Appointment	Healthcare Provider Appointment	Healthcare Provider Appointment
<p>Healthcare Provider's Name <input type="text"/></p> <p>Date: <input type="text"/></p> <p>Time: <input type="text"/></p> <p>Location: <input type="text"/></p>	<p>Healthcare Provider's Name <input type="text"/></p> <p>Date: <input type="text"/></p> <p>Time: <input type="text"/></p> <p>Location: <input type="text"/></p>	<p>Healthcare Provider's Name <input type="text"/></p> <p>Date: <input type="text"/></p> <p>Time: <input type="text"/></p> <p>Location: <input type="text"/></p>

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Date: <input type="text"/>	Date: <input type="text"/>	Date: <input type="text"/>
Time: <input type="text"/>	Time: <input type="text"/>	Time: <input type="text"/>
Location: <input type="text"/>	Location: <input type="text"/>	Location: <input type="text"/>



Find the Right Healthcare Provider to Talk about Your Weight and Health!



**Obesity
Care
Providers**

Powered by the Obesity Action Coalition

📍 What is your zip code?

👤 Select Specialty... ▾

🔍 SEARCH

How does it work? It's easy! Filter your search by:

Specialization:

- Bariatric Surgeon
- Dietitian
- Nurse Practitioner
- Physician
- Physician Assistant
- Psychiatrist
- Psychologist

Location:

- Use your zip code to do a quick search
- Find healthcare providers near you!

Get Useful Tips

Prepare for your appointment with:

- Valuable tips on what to bring during your consultation
- Practical information to better understand your journey with weight
- Questions to ask in order to have an honest conversation about your weight and health

Finding the right healthcare provider is a click away! Get started now!

ObesityCareProviders.com

This resource is brought to you by:





ABOUT THE **OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)**

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



VIBRANT COMMUNITY



NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



YWM CONVENTION



ADVOCACY



PUBLIC EDUCATION

LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC believes that great things happen when we learn, connect, and engage. That's why the OAC Community exists. The OAC Community is a place that brings together individuals from all backgrounds and experiences. The OAC's Community members are the driving force by which we make change happen - whether it's in our own weight and health journeys, in each other's lives or for anyone who has ever been affected by obesity.

Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
- Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections

AND MUCH MORE



JOIN TODAY: GO TO OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN

info@obesityaction.org

(800) 717-3117 | (813) 872-7835 | Fax: (813) 873-7838



@ObesityActionCoalition

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OBESITYACTION.ORG

The OAC would like to thank Sarah Muntel, RD, for her assistance, knowledge and expertise in creating this resource.

