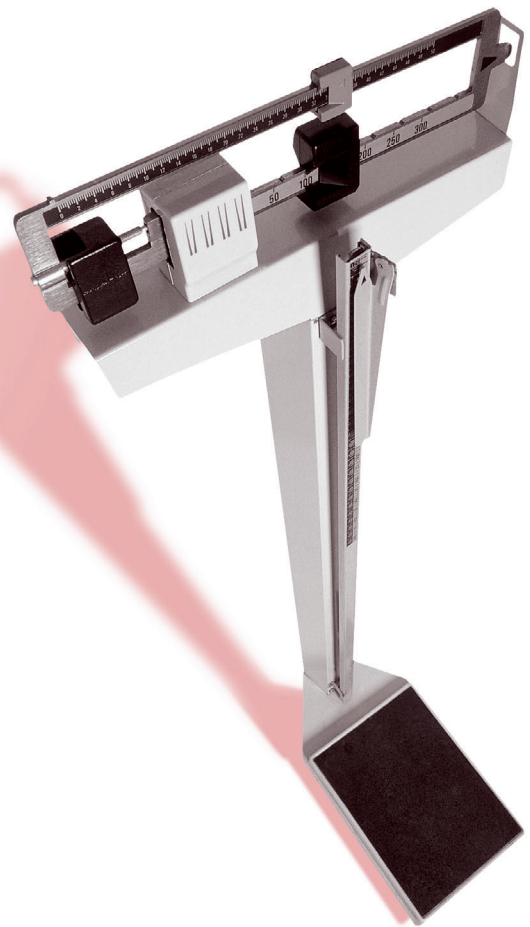


Losing Weight, Gaining Health

If weight control was easy, 64% of American adults wouldn't be classed as overweight or obese. Easy or not, though, losing weight and keeping it off is about something much more important than numbers on a scale or statistics. *Maintaining an appropriate weight for you is vital to your health.*



Why Weight Loss Matters

If your doctor has advised you to lose weight, there are many reasons to do so, and they all boil down to one: excess body fat is unhealthy. Obesity makes you more likely to develop heart disease or have a stroke because it puts extra strain on the heart. Obesity can raise your blood cholesterol, raise your blood pressure, and lead to diabetes.

Here's the good news Losing as little as 10 pounds can lower your risk of these serious health threats. More good news—experts say that rather than trying to lose lots of weight quickly, the ideal rate of weight loss is 1 to 2 pounds a week. For most women, this sensible rate can be achieved by consuming 1,200 to 1,500 calories a day. For most men, the daily calorie range is 1,500 to 1,800.

Here's how calories translate into pounds To lose 1 pound, you need to burn 3,500 more calories than you take in—called a “calorie deficit.” So to lose 1 pound a week, you need to cut your caloric intake (and/or burn calories with exercise) by 500

**1 pound equals a
3,500-calorie energy deficit.**

**So to lose 1 pound a week,
reduce your caloric intake
(and/or burn calories with exercise)
by 500 calories a day.**

In other words:

7 days x 500 calories = 3,500 calories = 1 pound.

**However, it's possible to create enough of an
energy deficit with exercise alone.**

For example, a 220-pound person who eats the same number of calories, but walks briskly for 1½ miles every day, will lose about 14 pounds in a year!

calories every day (7 days x 500 calories = 3,500 calories = 1 pound).

An active lifestyle goes hand in hand with safe, healthy weight loss—in fact, physical inactivity puts you at greater risk for heart disease. So your health care team will probably recommend an exercise program tailored to you. Consider this example of how exercise contributes to weight loss: a 200-pound person who eats the same amount of calories but starts walking briskly for 1½ miles every day will lose about 14 pounds in 1 year.

Where Do I Start?

As in all health matters, your best starting point is your doctor. He or she will help you set a realistic weight-loss goal and can provide some eating guidelines. You may also be referred to a registered dietitian or a licensed nutritionist for specialized assistance. Your individual eating plan depends on you and your goals.

How Can I Keep Going?

Sticking with a healthy eating plan takes some changes in behaviors and attitudes. The following techniques can help you stay on course—even when you detour.

- Set short-term, specific goals. Instead of focusing on an overall weight-loss goal, pick 2 goals relating to eating and exercise changes that will bring you to those goals. For example, it's unrealistic to set a goal of walking 5 miles every day. A more attainable (and flexible) goal is walking 30 minutes a day, 5 days each week.
- Reward yourself often. Avoid planning one big reward for reaching a big goal. Give yourself lots of small rewards for meeting smaller goals, instead. Examples: a new CD, going out to a movie, or just some quiet time to yourself.
- Check up on yourself. Writing down your progress—whether it's about eating more vegetables or taking your daily walk—is a proven way to help reach a goal (like weight loss). As you see your success on paper, it motivates you to keep going and provides a record that your health care professional can review.
- Expand your (nonfood) horizons. When you feel the urge to overeat or to eat something not on your nutrition plan, find a nonfood way to respond—take a walk, enjoy time with a hobby, meditate.
- Allow yourself to lapse. One instance of unhealthy eating or skipping exercise isn't failure—it's a lapse. You *can* get back on track.

Remember

Weight loss can make a big difference in your health and your life. Along with an active lifestyle, losing weight can help you reduce your risk of serious disease—perhaps by losing as little as 10 pounds. Ask your doctor how you can get started—and keep going until you reach a healthier weight.