

Ten Tips for Sensible Weight Control and Healthy Living



People usually eat when they are hungry, but may also eat for many other reasons. Eating may occur when you are nervous, bored, depressed, or just have food available. If you find yourself eating for reasons other than being hungry, try to follow some of these tips.

- **Choose sensibly.** Choose daily healthy, reasonable changes for long term rather than crash dieting.
- **Eat at least 3 meals.** Eating 3 meals helps boost your metabolism and prevents you from overeating because of being too hungry from skipping a meal.
 - ▶ Women: Aim for 300-500 calories a meal.
 - ▶ Men: Aim for 400-600 calories a meal.

With a 100-200 calorie snack, you will limit yourself to a healthy 1200-1500 calories for women, 1500-1800 calories for men. A food diary may make you become more aware of whether you are over or under-eating.

Keep a food diary by recording every item of food you eat for meals and snacks. You are more aware of what you eat when you record your food intake. Be sure to record the amount eaten of each item and when and where you ate the food. This may also help you identify situations where eating becomes a problem. This may be easiest to do right after eating a meal or snack so that you don't forget to record it.

- **Do not assume you must give up foods.** Enjoy all types of foods, but eat high-calorie foods in small amounts and less frequently. Fill up on low calorie drinks, vegetables, fruit, or broth-based soup. This is a realistic eating plan, one which you can follow long-term.
- **Build your diet on plant based foods,** as the food guide pyramid illustrates. Make sure you eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Choose whole grain breads and starches. Complement your diet with small portions of meat, fish or poultry. Include 2-3 servings of low fat dairy products. Choose oils, nuts or soft margarines instead of solid fats.
- **Avoid quick weight loss.** Losing more than 2 pounds a week on a regular basis may cause you to lose muscle mass. A gradual weight loss of 1-2 pounds a week helps you lose fat, not muscle. In the early stages you may lose more since it may be largely water weight.

- **Realize that activity is very important.** Choose activities and sports you enjoy, and exercise most days of the week. It is best to exercise 30 minutes each day. Increasing your activity throughout the day helps.
- **Use behavior modification tools.** Do not try to change too much at once! Work on 1 or 2 changes at a time to create healthier habits for long term results. For instance, if you eat too fast or eat while watching TV, you may find it helpful to train yourself to eat slower and enjoy your food more by minimizing distractions during meals. When you eat slowly and are not distracted, you are more likely to recognize when you are full. It is a natural way to eat less.
- **Address other reasons for over-eating.** If you often eat due to boredom, stress, or loneliness, teach yourself more appropriate habits. Your dietitian, doctor, or therapist can help.
- **Do not make weight the only measure of success.** Muscle weighs more than fat, so you may be gaining muscle and losing fat, but not seeing results on the scale. If your clothes are fitting looser, but your weight is not dropping, this is likely the reason. Success is whether or not you feel healthier mentally and physically.
- **Realize that occasional indulging is normal.** Try not to binge, but even if you slip, forgive yourself and get back to following those healthy habits!

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