



Nutrition Topics
University of New Hampshire

Weight

WEIGHT

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What habits do you have with food?

Analyzing the points below can help you see that the amount of food you eat is not the only concern when trying to lose some weight. Behaviors around food have just as much importance and need to be addressed when beginning to work toward a healthier you. Food type and quantity: Write down every item you eat and how it is prepared. Are your portions too large? Are you missing key food groups or eating a lot of fat?

Time of day:

Are you leaving too much time between meals or are you skipping meals? Regular meals can help prevent overeating at a later time.

Minutes spent eating:

Eating too fast can lead you to eat too much.

Activity:

Distractions can cause too much eating and less enjoyment of food.

Location: Eating on the run vs. a designated place for eating (such as the kitchen table).

Feelings: Hunger level, stress, loneliness, etc. can all cause eating or overeating.

Hunger/Fullness Level: Pay attention to your body's signals.

Is your goal weight realistic for you?

Several charts are available that can give you an idea of your "ideal weight range" for your height. But here are some considerations:

- How much muscle do you have and what's your bone frame size? It's not just fat that determines the number on the scale.
- Set point theory: The body takes an active role in maintaining its own stable weight range based on genetics, food intake and level of exercise.
- What has been your lowest stable weight?
- What exercise and eating habits did you have at that time?
- How does your own weight history compare to your goal weight?

Toss out the "All-or-Nothing"

Set a goal for a small but healthy weight loss first. A realistic weight can be reached more successfully. Feel proud of small successes; start from where you are, not from where you want to be.

Small Changes = Big Steps in Health

If you're overweight, losing just 5-10% body weight can lower elevated blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol and triglycerides and help to raise self-esteem. Any loss is better for health than nothing (and it's easier to lose a small amount at a time).

Awareness

- Learn about food, fat, food labels, etc.
- Learn how your lifestyle (stress, exercise, timing of meals, etc.) can dictate how much and why you eat.

Substitute Fattening Foods

Here are some ideas:

- Try cereal, milk and fruit for breakfast instead of eggs, bacon, etc.
- Try jelly instead of cream cheese, butter or margarine on toast.
- Beware of junk food snacks; try having lower fat snacks on hand such as sweetened cereal, fruit salad or even frozen juice bars.

Avoiding Food Cravings

- Eat regular meals, at least 3 per day (skipping meals can cause craves and over-consumption of food at a later time).
- Don't deprive favorite foods. Take charge, all foods are fine in moderate amounts.
- For the times that you've just got to have a certain food, try these steps:
 - First decide if you really want or need the item at this time.
 - If you decide to eat it, separate out a moderate portion; this gives you control over how much you'll eat.
 - Give yourself permission to eat; this allows you the control and helps free yourself from any future guilt about eating the item.
 - Eat the food slowly and fully enjoy!

EXERCISE

Regular exercise is key for maintaining a weight change and for maintaining good health.

- Get out and move your whole body on several days during the week.
- Regular exercise trims inches, burns fat, tones muscles and stimulates your metabolism (allowing you to eat more and avoid gaining weight).
- Begin with an easy and enjoyable activity: brisk walking moves your whole body and gives you the benefits other exercises offer. Be sure to pick an activity you'll stick with and look forward to doing!

Changing your weight takes time and patience. Beware of "diets" claiming quick results. Quick losses usually don't last long. Go for healthy and gradual changes for a lifetime!

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