

Weight Management for Adults

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What is A Healthy Weight?

A healthy body weight is different for everyone. It varies by your height and by your bone size and the amount of muscle in your body. A healthy weight is a weight at which you feel good, and are able to maintain. **Body Mass Index (BMI)** relates weight to height. It gives a measurement of a person's total body fat. Optimal weight is a BMI of less than 25, overweight is a BMI of 25-29.9 and obesity is a BMI of 30 and above.

This is how you calculate your BMI:
$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{weight (in pounds)} \times 703}{\text{height (in inches)}^2}$$

A healthy weight is also a weight that does not put you at additional risk for illness or disease. The following chart shows weights that may put you at increased risk for disease or illness. (A healthy weight would fall well below the pounds indicated)

At-Risk Weight Chart*

Height in feet/inches without shoes	Weight in pounds without clothing
4'10"	129 (and up)
4'11"	133
5'0"	138
5'1"	143
5'2"	147
5'3"	152
5'4"	157
5'5"	162
5'6"	167
5'7"	172
5'8"	177
5'9"	182
5'10"	188
5'11"	193
6'0"	199
6'1"	204
6'2"	210
6'3"	216
6'4"	221

*(If you weigh the same or more than the weight indicated for your height, you are at increased risk for disease)

Why is it Important to Be At a Healthy Weight?

Many diseases are associated with being overweight and overfat (obese). Obesity is defined as being greater than 30% body fat for women and greater than 20% fat in men. Obesity can lead to heart disease, blood fat disorders like high cholesterol, diabetes, hypertension, and some types of cancer. Obesity is also associated with joint disease (arthritis), gallstones, and respiratory problems. Even small amounts of weight loss can help you delay or prevent disease that is common in people who are overweight.

Weight Loss: Where Do I start?

Before you make any lifestyle changes, it's important that you discuss those changes with your physician. This is especially true if you are being treated for a chronic illness since a change in your lifestyle might affect your treatment.

No Magic Bullet

Unfortunately, there is no magic bullet when it comes to weight loss. Your body burns anywhere from 1200-2000 calories (or more) a day. Either you need to decrease the amount of food you eat or you need to increase the amount of calories that your body burns (generally through exercise). The most successful weight loss programs use a combination of both – eating fewer calories while burning more calories each day.

How Much Weight Should I Lose Each Week? (Safe Weight Loss)

A weight loss of ½ to 1 ½ pounds a week is a safe weight loss. Slow and steady weight loss will encourage your body to use stored body fat instead of stored protein (from muscles). If weight loss is from stored body fat, you can minimize or prevent the quick drop in your metabolism that can happen with a quick weight loss. Very low calorie diets (800 or less) may mean a quick weight loss, but may also mean that your body has burned protein instead of fat and may be one of the reasons that it is easy to regain that weight back. Exercising will also help your body keep your muscle protein when you are in a calorie deficit (burning more calories than you are taking in from food). Men will lose weight faster than women because they have a higher lean body mass (more muscle) than women.

Remember – Weight Loss takes time!

Let's calculate how many calories you need a day for a ½ pound (1750 calories) to 1½ pound (5250 calories) weight loss a week. If your current calorie intake level is 2000 calories a day, you could start with 300-a-day less calories (1700 calories a day) for a 2100 calories- a- week loss – almost a pound, and well on your way to a safe and healthy weight loss.

Note: Do not drop your calories to below 1200 calories a day unless you are being supervised by a physician. At this level it is very difficult to get all of the vitamins and minerals your body needs.

Why Exercise?

Your body is made for exercise. Here are some good reasons for exercising:

- Promotes weight loss and maintenance
- Enhances your body's use of insulin
- Improves your circulation system – your heart, lungs, and delivery of blood and oxygen to cells
- Helps to relieve stress

It may sound easy to decrease the calories you eat by 300 a day, but it is hard to keep that up. People who exercise are more likely to keep the weight OFF once they've lost it. Here are some other good reasons:

- The more you exercise – the faster your body moves to burning fat for energy.
- Exercise increases your motivation to be successful about weight loss. Exercise can help get you through that difficult stage when it seems like your weight isn't budging.

Here's an estimate of how many calories a 150-pound person burns in one hour:

Activity	Calories Burned per Hour (150 pound person)
Bicycling 6 mph	240
Bicycling 12 mph	410
Jogging 5 ½ mph	740
Jogging 7 mph	920
Swimming, 25 yds./min	275
Swimming, 50 yds./min	500
Walking, 2 mph	240
Walking, 3 mph	320
Walking, 4 ½ mph	440

Calories burned may vary by a person's weight. A person who is lighter than 150 pounds will burn fewer calories, and a heavier person will burn more.

Source: "Exercise and Your Heart," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, NIH Publication No. 83-1677.

Changing Your Eating Behavior

Behavior modification is a term we use to mean changing unhealthy behaviors. First you need to identify unhealthy eating behaviors and then find a way to change those habits.

Eating behavior change plans may include:

- Keeping a food and exercise diary to track your progress and success.
- Identifying and changing your environment to prevent overeating and lack of exercise.
- Strategies to prevent you from slipping back into old habits.

Each person has a different weight gain history. For some, the weight gain occurred when they were young and they have been struggling with weight loss for years. Others may have only recently experienced a weight gain. No matter what your weight history, here are some other tips that can lead to healthier eating:

Behavior Modification Tips

- When you eat, do nothing but eat so that you know exactly how much you are eating
- Chew everything carefully. It takes a while for your stomach to tell your brain that you are full.
- Stay away from the kitchen unless you are preparing your meal so that you will not be tempted to eat.
- Focus on eating healthy foods – fruits and vegetables
- Eat sitting down at one chosen place. (For example, the kitchen, outside patio.)
- Leave the table as soon as you are finished.
- Do not combine eating with other activities such as watching television or reading.
- Do not put bowls of food on the table. Put the food on your plate and leave the food bowls in the kitchen.
- Do not keep foods at home that you tend to overeat.
- Keep food out of sight; in cupboards, pantry, or the refrigerator.
- Eat before going food-shopping.
- Decide before food-shopping how much you will spend, and only buy healthful foods.
- Plan meals and snacks. Plan in advance for special events, parties, dinners.
- Eat a small meal or snack before going to special events or parties.
- Ask family members not to eat inappropriate foods around you.
- Substitute physical activity for snacking.
- Learn to listen to your body. Only eat when you are hungry.
- Eat slowly. Stop eating when you no longer feel hungry.
- Put your fork down between bites.
- Delay a snack for 10 minutes.
- Serve food on a smaller plate.
- Divide portions in half, wait to eat the second portion.
- Seek support. It is very important to have the support of family and friends to help you to keep those unwanted pounds off.

Where Should the Calories Come From?

Some popular fad diets tell you to avoid calories from carbohydrates. This may be useful if you are experiencing trouble managing your blood sugars (diabetes or pre-diabetes, called insulin resistance). Some fad diets encourage a high percentage of calories from protein. However, diets that focus mainly on one source of energy or exclude a source of energy may not be safe for everyone. The safest diet is when 55-60 % of your calories come from carbohydrates (breads, grains, cereals, fruits and vegetables), 15-20% of your calories from protein (meat, fish, and dairy) and 25-30% or less from fat. Here's how that breaks down:

Example: 1800-Calorie Diet

55% Carbohydrate =	990 Calories or 247 grams (divide by 4 calories/gram)
20% Protein =	360 Calories or 90 grams (divide by 4 calories/gram)
25% Fat =	450 Calories or 50 grams (divide by 9 calories/gram)

Food Diary

Here's a sample Food Diary (log) to track the food you are eating. A food diary is a good way to track all of your hard work. It is often a good way to see if a person is really ready for weight loss. If you aren't willing to take the time to track the food you eat, you might not be ready for the challenges ahead. Make a diary and keep track of the food you are eating. A calorie count booklet will help you to track the number of calories in each item. Don't forget to estimate the amount of food eaten. At first you might want to use a measuring cup until you can more closely identify portion sizes.

Time	Food Eaten	Amount/ calories	Time	Food Eaten	Amount/ Calories	Time	Food Eaten	Amount/ calories
	Day			Day			Day	
7AM	Wheat Toast	1 slice 75cal						
	Orange Juice	½ cup 90cal						
	Jelly	1 tsp. 18cal						

Food Labels

The Nutrition Facts Food Label will help you track the number of calories in foods in a serving, as well as other information about fat, cholesterol, sodium, protein, fiber, carbohydrates, vitamin, and mineral content.

Some important things to look for include:

- Note the number of servings in the container.
- The % Daily Value is the percentage of the total recommended amount of that nutrient that you are getting in one serving.
- Calories for each serving
- Total fat in grams and how much of that fat is saturated. People at risk for heart disease should eat no more than 7-10% of their total calories from saturated fat
- Fiber has been shown to help reduce risk for heart disease and certain cancers. It can also help the person who is eating less calories feel more “full”. Eat 25-30 grams a day.
- In general, a healthy diet should include no more than 2,400 mg of sodium a day, but some may need to have further restrictions because of high blood pressure.

See page 7 for more helpful hints about food labels

The best recommendations for weight loss and maintenance are simply to follow a lower-calorie eating plan combined with regular exercise. Your eating plan should include all of the nutrients you need on a regular basis. Maintaining weight loss may be your most difficult challenge. This involves changing current behaviors to a permanent lifestyle that includes exercise and healthy eating habits to support your healthier weight. The goal of safe weight loss is to achieve a realistic weight and MAINTAIN it for good health.

SAMPLE 1500 CALORIE MEAL PLAN

This plan contains 1520 calories: 52% calories from carbohydrates, 18% from protein, and 25% from fat.

Still Need Some Help?

This article includes only a few helpful hints for weight management for adults. You may need more individual training and counseling or may prefer the support of a group class. You should always discuss your plans for weight loss with your physician. Your physician may suggest that you work with a dietitian. If your physician does not have a dietitian to refer you to, you can check with your local hospital to see if they have group weight management classes, or you can check with the American Dietetic Association for a dietitian in your area. If you have questions about your health care benefits, please check with your health plan's customer service.

This information is provided for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for sound medical judgement. If you have any questions or concerns, you should discuss them with your physician.

See the following pages for more helpful hints, a sample meal plan, and an easy low-calorie recipe.

Resources:

American Dietetic Association
National Institutes of Health

Related Healthy Living Links:

HealthyExtensions
Discounted programs, products, and services
Today's Health and Wellness Magazine

BREAKFAST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3/4 cup bran flakes cereal 1/2 cup skim milk 1/2 banana 1/2 cup orange juice 1/2 bagel 1 tsp. diet margarine
LUNCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sandwich: 2 oz deli turkey 1 oz reduced-fat cheese lettuce 1 Tablespoon reduced-calorie salad dressing
1 apple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 slices whole-wheat bread 1 cup skim milk
SNACK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 small grapes 1/2 cup nonfat yogurt (artificially sweetened)*
DINNER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 oz baked pork chop 1/2 baked potato 1/2 cup steamed broccoli 1 cup mixed lettuce greens (salad) 1 Tablespoons reduced-calorie dressing 1 Tablespoon diet margarine
SNACK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 cup fresh raspberries 1/3 cup nonfat frozen vanilla yogurt**

* This is counted as 1/2 milk exchange

**This is counted as 1 bread exchange

HELPFUL HINTS

Food Labels - How Can I Use Them?

Understanding food labeling can help broaden your food choices, and avoid foods that may hinder your success.

- A “low calorie” food contains 40 calories or less in a serving. Check the serving size on the label, as they vary with each product. These foods can be included in a weight loss or maintenance plan, but know how to use them in your plan, and realize that calories are not the only thing to watch for. It is important to keep the fat low, also. A piece of fruit is a more nutritious choice than a “low calorie” food, and may keep you satisfied longer.
- A “low fat” food means that one serving of that food has 3 grams of fat or less per serving. However, a “low fat” food may have a lot of added sugar, which can make the food high in calories.
- A “light” or “lite” food can contain either fewer calories or less fat than the traditional food. This does not necessarily mean that the food is truly low in fat or low in calories.
- “Reduced,” “Lower,” or “Less” fat foods all mean that a food must have 25% less of a nutrient (such as fat or sodium) or 25% fewer calories than the traditional food. For example, 1 oz of reduced-fat cheese may have 5 grams of fat instead of regular cheese, which has 9 grams per oz. That cuts the fat almost in half! However, it is still higher than a “low fat” cheese, which has 3 grams of fat per ounce. “Reduced” or “lower” calorie foods have fewer calories than “low calorie” foods.
 - Remember to check portion sizes before eating the specially labeled food. It is the most important item on the label. If you eat more than the portion size, you will be getting more calories. Keep your focus on choosing a variety of foods, selecting whole grains, fruits, vegetables; lean meat, fish and poultry; and minimizing fat.

Evaluating a Weight-Management Program

If you decide to enroll in a weight-loss or weight-management program, there are certain important things to look for to make sure the program is safe and effective.

- Talk to your physician about recommending a weight loss program that will be appropriate for your health needs and weight loss goals.
- Obtain information describing in detail the program risks, what is expected of you as a participant, cost, lab tests for monitoring, credentials of the people running the program, and is a medical history taken? Program products -are they acceptable to you and are they extra to the cost of the program? Request information that demonstrates weight loss maintained for 5 years or more. Do not rely on individual success stories of the program as a valid test of the program’s success rate.
- Make sure the program has individualized nutrition, exercise, and behavioral components.
- Is a reasonable weight goal set based on individual, cultural, and family history background, and not on height/weight charts or a given number? What is the expected rate of weight loss? The rate of weight loss should be 1/2 to 1 pound per week. A rate faster than this is not healthy.
- Physical activity should be a high priority of the program. Make sure the activity you choose is reasonable, safe, affordable, and can fit your lifestyle. Is each person screened for medical conditions before an exercise program is prescribed?
- A maintenance program should be offered for at least 2 years.

The success of a program is based on the long-term maintenance of weight loss and healthy lifestyle of individuals. Have realistic expectations of a program and yourself. If you do decide to go with a program, be willing to devote the time and effort necessary.

Weight management programs have an ethical responsibility to provide people with clear, truthful information that is not misleading. This includes a written or oral description of the program, including risks and benefits, and should allow for questions.

Contact the American Dietetic Association for more information: (800) 877-1600 at www.eatright.org

Resource: The American Dietetic Association