

# Healthy Weight, Healthy Living



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER

Getting to and maintaining a healthy weight is important for overall health. It can help you to prevent or control many diseases and conditions, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, gallstones, breathing problems and certain cancers. It also helps you to feel good about yourself and gives your body energy.



Source: CDC/Amanda Mills

## Am I at a healthy weight?

Body Mass Index (BMI) is an estimate of body fat based on your height and weight. It helps you and your healthcare team find your ideal weight and create a goal for weight loss, if needed. Ask your team for help to determine your BMI or see the handout, [Body Mass Index \(BMI\)](#), for more information.

My height: \_\_\_\_\_

My current weight: \_\_\_\_\_

My current BMI: \_\_\_\_\_

My goal weight: \_\_\_\_\_

### Aim for a BMI between 19 and 25.

If you need to lose weight, losing just 5 to 10 percent of your current weight over 6 months will lower your risk for heart disease and other conditions.

## About energy balance

Reaching and maintaining a healthy weight involves a **balance between the calories you eat (energy IN) and the energy you burn (energy OUT)**. **To lose weight, you will need to make lifestyle changes that burn more calories than you eat.**

## How to reach and maintain a healthy weight

- 1. Set realistic health goals**, such as losing 1 to 2 pounds per week or walking for 30 minutes, 6 days a week. **Be willing to adapt your plans.** For example, if you can only walk 4 days this week, add 15 minutes to your walk each day to meet your weekly walking goal of 180 minutes.
- 2. Get moving.** Increase your physical activity and get moderate exercise most days of the week. Start slowly, such as walking briskly for 15 minutes twice a day, and keep the activity challenging. Do any activity that you enjoy, such as swimming and biking. Work towards exercising 180 minutes or 3 hours a week.
- 3. Keep a food journal.** Studies show that food journals help people to lose more weight. Writing in a journal will increase your awareness of the calories in the amount of food you eat.

**4. Eat 3 meals and 1 or 2 snacks a day.**

Eating at regular intervals boosts your metabolism and keeps you from overeating the rest of the day. Try to eat about every 3 or 4 hours during the day.

- Women: 300 to 500 calories/meal
- Men: 400 to 600 calories/meal
- Snacks: 100 to 250 calories

Choose whole grains, vegetables, fruit, beans, lean meats and proteins, and fat free or low fat milk products over fried and processed foods. Limit the amount of oil, butter and mayonnaise you add to foods as they are high in calories.

**5. Eat more whole foods and limit processed foods.**

Processed foods are changed from their natural forms. For example, choose grilled chicken over breaded and fried chicken nuggets or choose a plain baked potato over fried French fries and potato chips. Eating foods closer to their natural form provides more nutrients and fewer calories.

**6. Eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.** These foods are lower in calories and full of nutrients like vitamins and minerals, fiber and compounds (phytochemicals) that help to prevent diseases. **One serving is ½ cup fruit or cooked vegetables or 1 cup raw vegetables.** Work up to eating 9 to 11 servings a day for more weight loss (fiber fills you up) and cancer prevention benefits.**7. Drink water and other no or low-calorie drinks, such as unsweetened tea and coffee,** instead of juices, sodas (regular or diet) and energy drinks.**8. All foods can fit in a healthy diet.** You do not have to give up your favorite foods to lose weight. Eat foods with low nutrients and high calories less often and in smaller quantities. For example, instead of drinking a 20-ounce soda every day, drink a 12-ounce soda. Over time, decrease this to 3 or 4 days a week.**9. Listen to your hunger levels.** On a scale from 1 to 10, eat when you feel slightly hungry (level 4) and stop when you are satisfied (level 6). Become aware of eating for reasons other than hunger, such as stress. See the handout, [Mindful Eating](#), for more information.**10. Sleep 7 to 8 hours a day.** Not getting enough sleep can lead to overeating or eating high calorie foods. Respect your body and give it the rest it needs.

**Talk to your healthcare team for resources and support.**

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**Talk to your doctor or healthcare team if you have any questions about your care.**

For more health information, contact the Library for Health Information at **614-293-3707** or e-mail [health-info@osu.edu](mailto:health-info@osu.edu).