

Tips for Weight Control and Healthy Living

People usually eat when they are hungry, but sometimes people may eat because they are nervous, bored, or depressed. If you find yourself eating for reasons other than being hungry, try to follow some of these tips:

- **Choose healthy foods.** Make healthy changes each day for long term weight loss rather than crash dieting. Crash dieting is losing a large amount of weight in a short time. Most people end up gaining the weight back.
- **Eat at least 3 meals a day and 1 to 2 snacks a day.** Eating 3 meals helps to boost your metabolism and prevents you from overeating. When you eat less than 3 times a day, you are more likely to become too hungry and eat too much later in the day. If you are hungry between meals, try to eat one or two 100 to 200 calorie snacks.
 - Most women need a total of around 1200 to 1500 calories a day to lose weight.
 - Men generally need 1500 to 1800 calories a day. Your calorie needs may be more or less. A Registered Dietitian (RD) can help you determine your calorie needs.
- **Choose a variety of foods.** Eat whole grain breads and starches. Eat small to medium portions of lean meat, fish or poultry. A deck of cards worth of meat is usually enough meat at a meal for a person. Also, include 2 to 3 servings of low fat dairy products each day. Limit the amount of oils, butter and mayonnaise you add to foods.
- **Keep a food diary.** Writing in a food diary can help you keep track of the calories, nutrients and food portions you eat. A food diary can also help you see any patterns of eating. Keep a food diary by

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recording every item of food you eat for meals and snacks. Be sure to record the amount eaten of each item and when and where you ate the food. Write in your diary right after you eat a meal or snack to help keep your diary up to date.

- **Enjoy all types of foods**, but eat high-calorie foods in smaller amounts and less often. Fill up on low calorie drinks, vegetables, fruit or broth-based soup. Create an eating plan that you can follow long term.
- **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 prevent disease. One serving is 1/2 cup fruit or cooked vegetables or 1 cup raw vegetables.
- **Daily activity.** Choose activities and sports that you enjoy, and exercise most days of the week. If you can, try to exercise 30 minutes each day. Increasing your activity throughout the day also helps. Walking is a good physical activity for most people.
- **Make 1 or 2 changes at a time.** This helps to create healthier habits for long term results. For example, if you eat too fast or eat while watching TV, you may find it helpful to eat slower and limit distractions during meals. When you eat slowly and have less distractions, you are more likely to recognize when you are full.
- **Address other reasons for over-eating.** If you often eat due to boredom, stress or loneliness, try to find the reason why this may happen. Talk to your doctor, nurse or dietitian about where to find more resources and support.
- **Set realistic goals.** Losing more than 2 pounds a week on a regular basis may cause you to lose muscle mass. Some people who have a smaller amount of weight to lose may only lose 1/2 pound or less a week. A gradual weight loss of 1 to 2 pounds a week helps you lose fat, not muscle. In the early stages, you may lose more weight since it may be largely water weight. Try not to binge, but even if you slip, forgive yourself and get back to following healthy habits. Remember, it takes time to form new healthy eating habits.