

Eating for a Healthy Weight

There are many health risks related to being overweight including heart disease, high blood pressure, type II diabetes, sleep apnea, osteoarthritis, respiratory problems and certain types of cancer. Losing even a small amount of weight can lower your risk of these health problems.

The key to weight loss is balancing calories-in (food and beverages) with calories-out (exercise and activity). Weight loss that lasts takes time, planning and commitment by making lifelong changes. Real progress comes from small changes you make over and over again.

What foods can I eat?

A “Non-Diet” approach to losing weight can be more pleasurable, easier to maintain and more successful over time. A “Non-Diet” approach consists of learning to make healthier, balanced food choices by watching portion sizes, increasing your awareness of the nutrient and caloric content of foods, not cutting out food groups and making lifelong behavioral changes in the way you eat. For a healthy diet:

- **Eat Whole Grain foods more often:** Whole grains such as whole wheat, whole oats, oatmeal, whole corn, brown rice and whole rye contain high amounts of fiber that help keep you full and are packed with vitamins and minerals. On the Nutrition Facts label look for the word “whole” or “whole grain” before the ingredient’s name. The whole grain should be listed first on the ingredient list. Choose products with five or more grams of fiber per serving.
- **Eat a variety of Vegetables everyday:** Vegetables are naturally low in calories, high in vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients and fiber. They can help fill you up during meal times and be used as a low calorie snack between meals. Choose a variety of different colored vegetables to maximize intake of vitamins, minerals, and fiber.
- **Eat a variety of Fruits everyday:** Each type of fruit contains different combinations of fiber, vitamins, minerals and other nutrients important for your health. The fiber in fruits can help fill you up and keep you feeling full, helping you to maintain a healthy weight.
- **Eat low fat Dairy foods:** Choose low fat or fat free cheeses, cottage cheese, string cheese, and cream cheese. Eat fat free yogurt; try strained, Greek yogurts, which have a similar creamy texture to whole fat yogurts. Switch to fat free (skim) or 1% milk.
- **Eat Protein foods that are lower in fat:** Choose leaner meats such as fish, poultry, low fat luncheon meats, bison, or lean beef. Remove visible fat or skin from cooked meat before eating. One to two times a week try choosing non-animal protein sources for your meals.
- **Use less Fats and Oils:** Choose lower calorie cooking methods such as baking, broiling, grilling, roasting and steaming instead of frying or sautéing.
- **Eat fewer Sweets:** Limit foods and drinks including candy, cookies, regular soda and sweetened drinks. Try fruit as a lower calorie dessert or to satisfy a sweet craving.



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