

# Weight Loss: Practical Tips

## What are some tips for weight loss?

People become overweight for many reasons. Weight issues can run in families. They can be caused by unhealthy behaviors and a person's environment. Certain health problems and medicines can also lead to weight gain.

There are some simple things you can do to reach and maintain a healthy weight:

- Eat 500 fewer calories per day than your body needs to maintain your weight. Women should aim for no more than 1,200 to 1,500 calories per day. Men should aim for 1,500 to 1,800 calories per day.
  - Avoid sweet drinks. These include regular soft drinks, fruit juices, fruit drinks, energy drinks, sweetened iced tea, and flavored milk.
  - Avoid fast foods. Fast foods such as french fries, hamburgers, chicken nuggets, and pizza are high in calories and can cause weight gain.
  - Eat a healthy breakfast. People who skip breakfast tend to weigh more.
  - Don't watch more than two hours of television per day.
  - Chew sugar-free gum between meals to cut down on snacking.
  - Avoid grocery shopping when you're hungry.
  - Pack a healthy lunch instead of eating out to control what and how much you eat.
- Eat a lot of fruits and vegetables. Aim for about 2 cups of fruit and 2 to 3 cups of vegetables per day.
  - Aim for 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity exercise (such as brisk walking), or 75 minutes per week of vigorous exercise (such as jogging or running).
  - Be more active. Small changes in physical activity can easily be added to your daily routine. For example, take the stairs instead of the elevator.
  - Take a walk with your family. A daily walk is a great way to get exercise and to catch up on the day's events.

## Where can I get more information about weight loss?

Your doctor

National Institutes of Health

Eating Healthy When Dining Out

Website: [http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose\\_wt/dine\\_out.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/dine_out.htm)

Healthier Eating While Saving Money

Website: [http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/downloads/tip\\_saving.pdf](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/downloads/tip_saving.pdf)

Weight-control Information Network

Website: <http://www.win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/index.htm>

September 2016

This handout was adapted with permission from Rao G. Weight loss: practical tips [patient handout]. *Am Fam Physician*. 2010;81(12):1456. <http://www.aafp.org/afp/2010/0615/p1456.html>. Accessed April 8, 2016.

**This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <http://familydoctor.org>.**

This information provides a general overview and may not apply to everyone. Talk to your family doctor to find out if this information applies to you and to get more information on this subject. Copyright © 2016 American Academy of Family Physicians. Individuals may photocopy this material for their own personal reference, and physicians may photocopy for use with their own patients. Written permission is required for all other uses, including electronic uses.



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF  
FAMILY PHYSICIANS