



Weight Management Tips- Diet

*University of
Pittsburgh
Medical Center
Information
for Patients*

Successful weight management involves reducing the amount of calories you eat, increasing your exercise level, and making lifestyle changes. This information will help you understand how you can make changes in your diet to affect your weight.

A calorie is a measurement of energy. Just about everything we eat has some calories, and we need a certain amount of calories every day to keep us going. Some types of foods have more calories than others. Carbohydrates and protein contain 4 calories per gram, and fat contains 9 calories per gram. This is why cutting down on the amount of fat you eat can help you lose weight.

You can lose about 1 pound a week if you reduce your calorie intake by 500 calories a day. To lose one pound, you need to cut 3,500 calories out of your meal plan or exercise enough to burn off 3,500 calories. If you cut 500 calories each day for a week, that adds up to 3,500 calories (7 days times 500 calories = 3,500 calories).

Adding exercise to your daily routine can speed up the process.

Most people need a daily diet of at least 1,200 calories a day. If you eat less, you could be missing important nutrients your body needs. It's important to take a multivitamin and calcium supplement if you are on a weight loss plan.

Here are some important tips to follow to lose weight:

- **Eat at least 3 times a day.** Smaller meals spaced throughout the day can reduce the urge to snack on high-calorie foods.
- **Start with a good breakfast every morning.** Remember it's important to "break the fast" and jump-start your metabolism for the day. Skipping meals can lead to eating extra calories at the end of the day.
- **Bake, broil, grill, poach, or steam** all of your meats, instead of frying.
- **Steam your vegetables.** Use some different herbs and vinegar or lemon juice to season them, or steam them over chicken broth for extra flavor.
- **Drink between 6 and 8 (8-ounce) glasses of water a day.** Choose low- or no-calorie drinks such as tea, diet soda, or diet fruit drinks. Juice, regular soda, and some sparkling waters can be high in calories.
- **Limit your meat intake to 6 ounces a day.** A 3-ounce piece of meat is about the size of a deck of cards.
- **Choose healthy, low-fat snacks.** Non-fat yogurt, non-fat cottage cheese, fruit, vegetables, pretzels, and low-fat popcorn are good choices.
- **Pay attention to portion sizes.** One of the easiest ways to lose weight is simply to reduce your portion sizes by one quarter.

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- **Eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.** These foods are high in fiber, fill you up, and give you lots of nutrients your body needs.
- **Read labels.** If an item says it has 190 calories per serving, and you eat 3 servings, you are actually eating 570 calories.
- **Limit the amount of fatty foods you eat,** like fried foods, cheese, snack foods, and desserts.
- **Reduce the amount of butter, margarine, and oil you use** by 1/4 to 1/2.
- Remember: “low-fat” does not necessarily mean “low-calorie.” Often, low-fat items have extra sugar. They may be lower in fat but may have the same amount of calories as the regular item.



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