



# Weight Management Tips — Lifestyle

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*University of  
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Medical Center*  
  
*Information  
for Patients*

Successful weight management involves reducing the amount of calories you take in, increasing your exercise level, and making lifestyle changes. Understanding how and why you eat are two big steps toward making changes in your lifestyle to lose weight. Making slow changes and having realistic goals will help you reach those ultimate goals: reduced weight and a healthier body.

Here are some ways you can make changes:

- **Keep track of everything you eat**, the times of day you eat, and how you are feeling at those times. This may help you identify times when you overeat, eat out of boredom, or eat automatically or unconsciously.
- **Slow down.** Put your fork down between bites and chew all of your food thoroughly. Remember that it takes 20 to 30 minutes for your stomach to signal your brain that you are full.
- **Use smaller plates and bowls.** Dinner plates have grown by 2 inches over the last 20 years. It now takes more food to fill up the plate.
- **Don't eat standing up.** Sitting down at the table with food on a plate makes you realize and remember what you eat.
- **Brush your teeth after meals and snacks.** This gets the taste of food out of your mouth.
- **Don't keep candy or snack food out** where you can see it and easily be tempted. Remember the old saying: "out of sight, out of mind."
- **Concentrate on eating** when you are eating. Don't eat while watching television or reading.
- **Shop from a list** and avoid going to the grocery store when you are hungry.
- **Be positive and realistic about your approach** to losing weight. Forget the "all or nothing" approach. One meal doesn't blow an entire week's or month's effort. Just get back on track at your next meal.
- **If you are at a buffet, take a little bit** of everything you want to try. A good rule of thumb is to leave enough space so that one food doesn't touch another on your plate.
- **Put on tight-fitting clothing** if you think you'll be tempted to overeat.
- **Try not to label foods as "bad," "illegal," or "forbidden."** It's not so much what you eat, but how much you eat that adds the pounds.
- **Give up on guilt.** One cookie, brownie, or piece of cake won't make you gain weight. Feeling guilty about it and then overeating as a result can.

- Remember the 5 Ds to fight cravings:
  - **DELAY** from eating for at least 10 minutes after you have a craving so that eating is not impulsive but is a conscious activity.
  - **DISTRACT** yourself from giving in to a craving by doing something that requires concentration.
  - **DISTANCE** yourself from food. Leave the room, or if you're at a restaurant, ask the waiter to remove your plate.
  - **DETERMINE** how important it is for you to eat the food you crave and how much you really want it.
  - **DECIDE** what amount is reasonable and appropriate. Eat it slowly and savor every bite.

## Stay on track

Try to think of your weight loss plan as “management” rather than “control.” Managing your cravings, managing your exercise, and planning your grocery shopping trips will help you reach your goals. Trying to control everything can lead to disappointment. Everyone has ups and downs. It's important to stay motivated. If you go overboard one day, don't give up. Just get right back on track the next day.



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University of Pittsburgh  
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Pittsburgh, PA, USA  
www.upmc.com

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