MANAGING YOUR WEIGHT THROUGH FOOD AND ACTIVITY

Tired of the many diets that promise fast and easy weight loss? It's time to take the sensible approach to managing weight. Rather than focusing on the short term, try to focus on long-term benefits and NOT on the scale. Steady, slow weight loss is healthier and more likely to stay off than crash dieting for days or weeks. How do you better manage your weight? A balanced diet and regular activity are the keys to your success.

The foods you eat and the amount of physical activity you engage in will determine how well you manage your weight. Something to remember is that there are no "good" and "bad" foods. Even your favorite high fat food can fit into a healthy diet when consumed in moderation. It's your overall pattern that often determines whether or not you have a problem with your weight.

What should you eat? Eating a balanced diet with servings from each of the food groups is the first step. Remember the food guide pyramid and pay attention to portions. Americans tend to have their own idea of what a serving is that is often larger than what nutrition experts recommend. A few tips to help you in your efforts to eat a healthier diet include:

- Eat at regular mealtimes and don't skip meals
- Strive to eat at least 5 fruits and vegetables each day
- Bake, broil, and grill foods rather than frying them in oil or butter
- Limit meat and protein foods to 2-3 servings (6-9 oz per day)
- Avoid eating in front of the TV and while engaging in other activities (i.e. reading the newspaper, talking on the phone)

- Drink at least 8 glasses of water each day

Start Moving! Those people who are successful in managing their weight not only eat healthfully, but engage in regular activity. Physical activity not only gives you energy, but it burns fat. Aerobic activity at least 3 times a week for 20-60 minutes can help you manage your weight. Examples of aerobic activities include jogging, swimming, cycling, walking, in-line skating, and using a stair master, elliptical, or rowing machine. Weight training not only increases muscle mass but helps you burn more calories at rest and should also be a part of your exercise regimen. Here are a few ideas on how you can fit activity into your day:

- Walk during your lunch hour
- Park further away when shopping and running errands
- Play outdoors with your kids
- When playing golf, walk the course instead of using a cart
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Take an after-dinner walk each night

Time for the test! Circle each statement you think is true:

- The most effective way to manage weight is taking a long-term approach and avoiding restrictive diets.
- A proper diet and adequate activity are critical components to managing weight.
- Even high fat foods do not need to be forgotten entirely when trying to manage weight.

If you've circled all three statements, you're exactly right!

For more information on managing your weight, contact your local Health and Wellness Center (HAWC) or Dietitian.

Shape Your Future…Your Weigh!™