

Weight Management

How do I know if I'm overweight or at a healthy weight?

Body mass index or BMI is a standard "tool" for helping you judge your body weight and the amount of body fat you have. BMI calculates a weight-to-height ratio and assigns a number to the result. The higher the BMI number above the normal range, the greater the degree of overweight. Generally speaking, a BMI of 25 is considered overweight and 30 or above is considered obese. People with a higher percentage of body fat tend to have a higher BMI except for body builders. Carrying excess body fat, not muscle, puts you at greater risk for health problems such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes and stroke. As with weight charts, BMI is only a guideline. Consult your doctor or registered dietitian about the weight and BMI that are healthy for you.

What is the best way to lose weight?

The secret to successful weight management is a healthy eating plan and physical activities that you enjoy. Although there really isn't one "best way," registered dietitians advise that slow, gradual weight loss is healthier, easier to manage and more likely to be permanent. Being active contributes to weight loss by burning calories and helping improve your overall fitness.

Use the Food Guide Pyramid as the basis for your healthy eating pattern. Be sure to include the minimum number of servings from each food group. A registered dietitian (RD) can help you develop a healthy eating plan that will fit your lifestyle.

Can I lose weight by just by counting fat grams or cutting out carbohydrates?

Calories still count if you're trying to lose weight. You need to monitor both calorie and fat intake. A low fat or low carbohydrate eating pattern is not necessarily low in calories. In order to lose weight, your calorie intake must be less than calories burned. Portion size is also key to any healthy eating plan. Large servings of even low fat foods can undermine your weight loss goals.

What should I do if I hit a plateau?

Hitting a plateau during a weight loss program is normal. Your body requires fewer calories to function as your weight decreases. Everyone's body levels off at a different weight. Some people will level off at a higher weight than others.

Gradually increasing the amount or intensity of your physical activity may help you continue to lose while for others it will help to maintain your new weight. Even a modest weight loss of 5% to 10% with maintenance can provide important health benefits. Any activity that gets you moving, helps you on the way to a healthy lifestyle.

Is it true that potatoes and bread are fattening?

That's a long-held myth. In fact, no food is truly fattening, and neither one of these by itself is high in calories. A medium potato has just 88 calories, and an average slice of bread, just 70 calories. It's the high-fat toppings or spreads that make calories add up. One tablespoon of butter, margarine, or regular mayonnaise adds 100 calories. In the bigger picture, starchy foods - those with complex carbohydrates - tend to be lower in calories than fatty foods.

For more information

 Contact your local **Health and Wellness Center** or **Dietitian**.