

# Healthy Lifestyle for Adult Weight Management

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A healthy lifestyle for weight management includes:

- healthy eating
- active living
- keeping a lifestyle journal

You have a better chance of success when you include all of the lifestyle behaviours above. Making healthy lifestyle changes takes time. You'll need the support of the people around you. This handout can help you decide what changes would be best for you, and what healthy habits you want to keep.

There are some other things that affect weight management—stress, how much sleep you get, how ready you are to make changes, and whether you have the time and energy to make changes now. If you have concerns about these things, talk to your healthcare provider.

## Weight management for adults

Healthy bodies come in all shapes and sizes. You don't always need to lose weight to improve your health. Reaching a stable weight and preventing weight gain are important goals with health benefits.

## What about weight loss?

Many people think they need to lose a lot of weight to improve their health. If you have extra weight, losing even 5–10% of your weight may help to lower your risk for diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and sleep apnea.

*Example of 5-10% weight loss:*

A 200 lb. person would aim to lose 10 to 20 lbs. Talk to your doctor or healthcare provider about your weight. Together, you can set a weight goal that is right for you.

## Eating for health and weight

The food and drinks we eat give us the calories we need to live. If we eat more calories than we need, we can gain weight.

## How many calories do I need?

Each person has different calorie needs.

If you eat fewer calories than you need, you can lose weight. Eating 500 to 1000 calories less a day than what you eat now may lead to weight loss of up to 1 kg (2 lbs.) in a week.

It can be harder to meet your nutrition needs when you're eating less calories. Eating less than 1500 calories each day may not give you all the nutrients you need. Eating less than 1200 calories is not healthy for most people.

A registered dietitian can figure out how many calories you need, and help you to develop a healthy eating plan that is right for you.

## How often should I eat?

**Choose 3 meals plus one or two snacks each day.**

Eating regular meals and snacks can help prevent cravings, and keeps you from getting too hungry.

When people skip meals, they often choose convenience foods that are higher in fat and calories. Skipping meals may also make you eat faster, and you might end up eating more food and calories than you need.

Eat most of your calories during the day, when you are more active and need more calories.

## Know your portions

How much you eat is as important as what you eat. You can gain weight if you eat and drink larger portions than you need.

Use the tips below to help manage portion sizes.

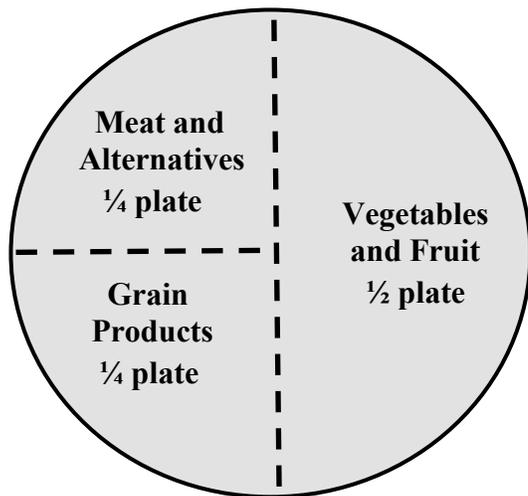
### Use your plate as your guide.

A healthy meal will help with portion control. Healthy meals include foods from the four food groups of Canada's Food Guide.

Choose a smaller plate. It may help you to eat smaller portions.

The picture below shows a healthy meal. Imagine your plate in three parts:

- $\frac{1}{2}$  plate is for Vegetables and Fruit
- $\frac{1}{4}$  plate is for Grain Products
- $\frac{1}{4}$  plate is for Meat and Alternatives
- Have a glass of milk to complete your healthy meal.



## Use food labels

Use food labels to make healthier food choices. Read the Nutrition Facts table on packaged foods to find the serving size and calories.

Look at the serving size.

- The serving sizes on similar products may be different. For example, a serving of low fat granola cereal is  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (60 mL), while a serving of bran flakes is  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125 mL).
- Would you eat the serving size in the Nutrition Facts table? If you eat more or less than the listed serving size, you need to adjust the calories listed. For example, if you eat half the serving, you will get only half the calories on the Nutrition Facts table.

## Measure your portions

Many people think they eat less than they really do. Measure your portions for a while. You may be eating larger portions and more calories than you think you are.

## Make a plan when eating out

Portions at restaurants are often very large.

- Limit eating out to 0–2 times per week.
- On the Internet, find nutrition information for the restaurant before you go. Plan to choose menu items that will meet your goals.
- Try sharing your meal with a friend, or order a half portion.

## What should I drink?

Water and low fat milk are the best drink choices. Water quenches your thirst with no calories.

Calories from sugary drinks and alcohol add up quickly and don't make you feel full. After having high calorie drinks, most people don't eat less at the next meal.

Fruit juice has vitamins and minerals, but also has about the same amount of sugar and calories as regular pop. Limit fruit juice to no more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125 mL) per day.

## Hunger and appetite

**Hunger** happens when your body needs food. Hunger may cause a growling stomach, low energy, or problems paying attention. If you are very hungry, you may also feel grouchy or dizzy.

You feel hungry **only** when your body needs food.

### Ideas to help with hunger

- Make time for meals and snacks. Take a break during work and activity to eat. This prevents skipping meals and snacking on less healthy foods.
- Eat a healthy snack in the afternoon to prevent eating too much at supper. Try a piece of fruit, vegetables and low calorie dip, or low fat yogurt.
- Fibre helps you to feel full. Choose foods high in fibre such as vegetables, fruit, beans and lentils, whole grains products (cereals, breads, pasta).
- Stop eating when you no longer feel hungry. Your body is telling you that you've had enough food. You don't have to "clean your plate".

**Appetite** is a craving for a certain food when you don't feel hungry. It may be hard to control your appetite. Appetite can be affected by:

- emotions such as boredom, sadness, happiness, or loneliness
- some health problems and medicines
- social events like parties
- having food close by and easy to eat
- food advertising on TV or the Internet

Appetite can happen **any time** of the day.

### Ideas to help with appetite

- Before you eat, ask yourself if you are hungry, or if you want to eat because of how you feel. Are you upset, lonely, bored, stressed, or tired? Instead of eating, try another idea like calling a friend or going for a walk.
- Try not to eat in front of the TV or computer, or while reading. It's easy to overeat while doing other activities because you are not paying attention to how much you are eating. Also, TV shows and commercials about food can increase our appetites.

## Be active

Activity is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Aim for at least 150 minutes of activity each week. You can be active for 10 minutes at a time, to add up to 150 minutes over the week.

The health benefits of activity include:

- stronger bones and muscles
- feeling better about yourself
- less muscle loss during weight loss
- better quality of life
- being more fit and flexible
- lower risk of heart disease
- less stress

Activity is healthy for everyone. However, to lose weight and keep it off you may need to be active more than 250 minutes per week. This is more activity than many people think they need for weight loss.

### Getting started with activity

- If you haven't been active for a long time, or if you have health problems, talk with your doctor about the type and amount of activity that's right for you.
- Choose activities that you like, and that fit into your schedule. Your activity doesn't have to be a sport, the gym, or a fitness class. Instead, you can take a 10-minute walk on your lunch hour or after supper.
- Be active with a friend or family member. Sharing a goal will help keep you on track. Join a walking group, or try a swim class.
- A pedometer is a device that counts how many steps you take. Use a pedometer, and write your steps in a journal. Review your journal to watch your progress and stay on track. See the next page for an example.

## Record your day to track your progress

A daily journal can help you become aware of your habits. You can then use your journal to find out which habits you can improve.

1. To get started, use the example of a daily journal below.
2. Include your mood. Use words such as bored, sad, mad, happy, tired, or worried.
3. The *Review Your Day* section below tells you how you can use your journal to set goals and make healthy lifestyle changes.

Date/Time	Place and who was there	What I ate and drank	Activity (What I was doing)	Mood (How I was feeling)
Monday/ 7 a.m.	Kitchen, alone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <math>\frac{3}{4}</math> cup Raisin Bran<sup>®</sup></li> <li>• 1 cup 1% milk</li> <li>• 1 large coffee</li> </ul>	Housework: 20 minutes Pedometer: 2320 steps	Bit tired, but getting ready to start the day

## Review your day

Use your journal to see what is working well, and to plan ways to improve your eating habits and activity.

1. In your journal, make a table like the one below.
2. Review the day in your journal. Compare your eating and activity habits to the suggestions in this handout.
  - Are there any eating habits you would like to improve?
  - Are you getting enough activity?
3. In the left column of your table, write down one habit from your journal that you would like to improve.
4. In the right column, write down how you can improve it.

Don't try to change everything at once. If you make small goals, you'll be more likely to achieve your goals, and keep your healthy lifestyle for life.

What I want to improve	What I can do to improve it
<p><i>Examples:</i></p> <p><b>Eating:</b> I snack on a chocolate bar each day at coffee break.</p> <p><b>Activity:</b> On stressful days I get no activity. I'm too busy and tired after supper, so I watch TV.</p>	<p><i>Examples:</i></p> <p><b>Eating:</b> At coffee break, I will eat a piece of fruit from home, or take a walk.</p> <p><b>Activity:</b> After supper, I will walk for 10 minutes to lower my stress level.</p>