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YOUR HEALTHY WEIGHT

Your weight is part of your overall health. Carrying too much extra weight can be harmful to your health. You may decide you want to lose weight to lower your risk for developing health problems such as high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes. You may want to reduce or avoid taking medications. Or you may just want to feel better and more energetic. Whatever your reason for wanting to lose weight, even a small weight loss, such as 5% to 7% of your current weight, can make a big difference in your health and well-being. For example, if a person weighs 200 pounds, this would mean losing 10 to 14 pounds. Losing more weight, such as 10% of your current weight, may lead to even more health benefits.

The key to losing weight and keeping it off is to make lifestyle changes that you can keep doing for the rest of your life. This includes eating healthier; reducing portion sizes; limiting sweets, fats, and alcohol; and being physically active. This booklet offers simple ways to make managing your weight easier. You will learn how to:

- Follow a healthy eating plan
- Set realistic goals
- Make positive lifestyle changes
- Add or increase physical activity

A registered dietitian nutritionist (or **dietitian**) can help you learn how to lose weight and keep it off. The letters RDN after a person's name stand for *registered dietitian nutritionist* and tell you that this person is a health professional who is an expert in nutrition care, education, and counseling.

To support your success, your dietitian and your health care team will work with you to:

- Monitor your overall health status by checking your body weight as well as your blood pressure, blood cholesterol and lipid (fat) levels, and if needed, your blood glucose (blood sugar)
- Review your food and eating habits, and use this to create a personalized healthy eating plan
- Set daily goals for calories from foods and activity to help you lose up to 2 pounds per week
- Learn strategies to help you prevent weight gain

Planning Healthy Meals

The Eating Plan (see page 65) can help you plan healthy meals and snacks. You and your dietitian will fill in the Eating Plan together. This eating plan is your guide to picking the number of **choices** from each food list in this booklet that is right for you. In your plan, the number of choices from each food list is based on your calorie and nutrient needs, your lifestyle, and your preferred eating schedule.

Planning healthy meals will help you:

- Reach and maintain a healthy weight
- Manage blood cholesterol and lipid levels
- Control your blood pressure
- Lower your risk for developing diabetes and other health problems

The energy your body needs is measured in calories.

The calories you eat come from 3 nutrients found in foods:

- Carbohydrates (carbs)
- Protein
- Fat

Healthy Eating, Physical Activity, and Your Weight

The foods you eat give you energy (or calories). Your body uses these calories to help you breathe, sit, walk, or move (called physical activity). If you eat the amount of calories that your body uses for daily activity on most days, your weight should stay about the same. You will gain weight if you eat more calories than your body uses on most days. When you eat fewer calories than your body uses for energy, you lose weight because your body must burn stored calories. Once you are at a healthy weight, you can stay at that weight by eating the right amount of food for your body balanced with your physical activity. Your dietitian can help you plan calorie and physical activity goals that are right for you.

Lifestyle Changes

Changing your lifestyle and eating habits can help you meet your weight goal. It's important to make changes gradually and mindfully. Your goal to lose weight is a personal choice—decide to do it for YOU (not for others). Begin by setting weekly goals for healthy eating, physical activity, and lifestyle choices. Write down your goals and the steps you'll take to reach them in the “My Action Plan” box.

Keep this advice in mind:

- Focus on eating well and the small successes you have instead of just the number on a scale. Since the amount of food you eat affects whether you reach and stay at a reasonable weight, work with your dietitian to make sure your eating plan is right for you.
- Be mindful, or aware, of your portions. If you eat too many calories from large portions, you'll likely gain weight—even if you're eating healthy foods. If you can, measure your food to see if your portions are the size you think they are.
- Eat out less often. Restaurant portions tend to be larger and higher in calories compared to foods you eat at home. If you choose to eat out, you can look online for the restaurant's menu choices and calorie content. This can help you make an informed decision about what to order. You can also share your meal or bring half of it home to eat at another time.
- Eat regularly. Skipping meals can make you more hungry, and then you may overeat. To avoid this, follow your meal plan and eat something every 3 to 4 hours during the day.
- Keep records. Keeping track of what you eat and drink is proven to help you lose weight. There are many food-tracking methods available, including apps to use on your phone, tablet, or computer.
- Move more. Active people are more successful at losing weight and keeping it off. See page 8 for tips to get moving and how to make physical activity part of your daily routine.

The Food Lists

The food lists in this booklet group foods together that have about the same amount of carbohydrates (carbs), protein, fat, and calories. The term **choice** is used to describe a certain quantity of food within a group of similar foods.

The lists are grouped into 3 main types:

1. **Carbohydrates** include:
 - **Starch** list (about 80 calories per choice)
 - **Fruit** list (about 60 calories per choice)
 - **Milk and Milk Substitutes** list (calories vary with the amount of fat)
 - **Nonstarchy Vegetables** list, such as green beans, tomatoes, and carrots (about 25 calories per choice)
2. **Proteins** include lists for **Lean Protein**, **Medium-Fat Protein**, **High-Fat Protein**, and **Plant-Based Protein**. A choice from the Protein lists will contain about 7 grams of protein, but the number of calories per choice will vary between these lists depending on the fat content.
3. **Fats** include lists for the healthier **Unsaturated Fats** and for less healthy **Saturated Fats**. A choice from the Fat list contains about 5 grams of fat and 45 calories per choice.

Other types of foods that you may eat are included in the **Sweets, Desserts, and Other Carbohydrates** list and **Combination Foods** list (such as casseroles). These lists have foods that can have different amounts of carbs, protein, fat, and calories. Foods eaten between meals and extras such as some fat-free and reduced-fat foods, condiments, drinks, and seasonings, can be found on the **Snacks and Extras** list. Drinks on the **Alcohol** list contain calories and some contain carbs.

A choice on the **Milk and Milk Substitutes** list has about 12 grams of carbs, 8 grams of protein, and varying amounts of fat.

MILK AND MILK SUBSTITUTES

Milk, milk products, and milk substitutes are included on this list. In general, 1 milk choice is about 1 cup of milk or plain yogurt.

Other types of milk products are found on other lists:

- Cheeses are on the **Proteins** list, and butter, cream, and coffee creamers are on the **Fats** list because these foods all have very few carbs.
- Ice cream and frozen yogurt are on the **Sweets, Desserts, and Other Carbohydrates** list.



Eating Plan Tips

- Milk and yogurt are good sources of calcium and protein. Be aware that grain-based or nut-based milks may be lower in calcium, protein, and other nutrients. Look for those fortified in calcium and vitamin D with a similar amount of protein as milk.
- Greek yogurt often contains more protein and fewer carbs than other types of yogurt.
- Milk and yogurt types that are higher in fat (those made from 2% or whole milk) have more saturated fat, cholesterol, and calories than low-fat or fat-free milk and yogurt.
- Health professionals suggest that adults and children older than 2 years choose lower-fat milk and milk products, such as fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk, or low-fat or nonfat yogurt.
- Remember that 1 cup = 8 fluid ounces or ½ pint. Most single-serve yogurt packs are between 4 and 6 ounces, which is about ½ to ¾ cup.

One milk choice has 12 grams of carbs and 8 grams of protein, and:

- One fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk choice also has 0 to 3 grams of fat and 100 calories per serving.
- One reduced-fat (2%) milk choice also has 5 grams of fat and 120 calories per serving.
- One whole-milk choice also has 8 grams of fat and 160 calories per serving.

Some milk foods and milk substitutes contain mostly carbs and fats:

- One carb choice has 15 grams of carbs and about 70 calories.
- One fat choice has 5 grams of fat and 45 calories.

Milk, Yogurt, and Milk Substitutes

FOOD	SERVING SIZE	CHOICES PER SERVING
Fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk		
milk, buttermilk, acidophilus milk, lactose-free	1 cup (8 fl oz)	1 fat-free milk
evaporated milk	½ cup (4 fl oz)	1 fat-free milk
yogurt, plain or Greek; may be flavored with a sugar substitute	⅔ cup (6 oz)	1 fat-free milk
yogurt with fruit, low-fat	⅔ cup (6 oz)	1 fat-free milk + 1 carb
chocolate milk	1 cup (8 fl oz)	1 fat-free milk + 1 carb
Reduced-fat (2%) milk		
milk, acidophilus milk, kefir, lactose-free milk	1 cup (8 fl oz)	1 reduced-fat milk
yogurt, plain	⅔ cup (6 oz)	1 reduced-fat milk
Whole milk		
milk, buttermilk, goat's milk	1 cup (8 fl oz)	1 whole milk
evaporated milk	½ cup (4 fl oz)	1 whole milk
yogurt, plain	1 cup (8 oz)	1 whole milk
chocolate milk	1 cup (8 fl oz)	1 whole milk + 1 carb
Eggnog		
fat-free	⅓ cup (2.7 fl oz)	1 carb
low-fat	⅓ cup (2.7 fl oz)	1 carb + ½ fat
whole milk	⅓ cup (2.7 fl oz)	1 carb + 1 fat
Rice milk		
plain, fat-free	1 cup (8 fl oz)	1 carb
flavored, low-fat	1 cup (8 fl oz)	2 carbs
Soy milk		
light or low-fat, plain	1 cup (8 fl oz)	½ carb + ½ fat
regular, plain	1 cup (8 fl oz)	1 carb + 1 fat
Almond milk		
plain	1 cup (8 fl oz)	½ carb + ½ fat
flavored	1 cup (8 fl oz)	1 carb + ½ fat
Coconut milk, flavored	1 cup (8 fl oz)	1 carb + 1 fat
Nondairy yogurt	1 cup (8 oz)	1 carb + 2 fats

FOOD LISTS FOR WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

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For general information about diabetes, call the American Diabetes Association at 1-800-342-2383 or visit www.diabetes.org.

For a referral to a registered dietitian nutritionist (RD), visit the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics website at www.eatright.org.

