

Weight Control

You know what it's like to be on a diet rollercoaster- you try every fad diet that comes along, lose weight, and gain it right back. You may even own two wardrobes: a "fat" one and a "skinny" one. Or maybe your weight increased as you became older and less active. You use to eat whatever you wanted, never gaining weight, and suddenly you notice you've taken on quite a different shape. Either way, it's time to stop dieting forever. Because diets only change – temporarily – what you eat. A successful weight control plan helps you learn new eating habits so you can lose weight and keep it off for good.

Know How Much to Lose

Weight tables can help you decide how much weight you should lose. Most show average weight ranges for your sex and height. But there are other factors to consider, too, such as your body frame, overall health, and at what weight you feel most comfortable. When in doubt, the Pinch Test and Jump Test will tell you whether it's time to lose weight.

The Pinch Test

This test rarely fails. Grasp the skin at the side of your waist and measure the fold. If it's more than an inch, it's time to lose weight.

The Jump Test

This is another honest test. Stand in front of a full-length mirror and jump. Anything that shook (and that shouldn't) is fat.

Develop New Eating Habits

What You Eat

If one of your habits is high-calorie food, try making some low-calorie substitutions. Enjoy some fresh fruit and pass up the sundae.

Where You Eat

Sometimes you may eat because of where you are – not because you're hungry. So try a new rule: you'll only eat at the dining table.

Why You Eat

Many people eat to be polite or fend off boredom. Ask yourself the real reason you're eating, and don't be afraid to say "no."

When You Eat

Some people starve all day and raid the fridge at night. But you're less likely to overdo it later if you eat three meals a day.

How You Eat

Eat on the run and it's easy to overeat. It takes 20 minutes for your stomach to tell your brain you're full, so slow down and enjoy!

A Sound Nutrition Plan

Plan your meals around sound nutrition, and it's easier and safer to lose weight. Eat a variety of foods to give your body the more than 50 different nutrients it needs. And choose foods that follow the four guidelines for healthy weight control: eat less fat, less sugar, less salt, and more fiber.

Balance Eating and Activity

To lose weight, you have to decrease the calories you eat and increase the calories you "spend" when you're active. It takes 3500 calories to make one pound of fat, so to lose a pound, you'd have to burn off an extra 3500 calories. The safest, most lasting weight control loss is gradual, so you might try to cut out 250 calories and burn off 250 calories each day.

Keep Records

Records help you keep track of your calories "in" and "out". Most of us underestimate how much we really eat, so keep a detailed record of what, where, why, when, and how you eat for one week. You need to know what your current habits are before you can start new ones.

Start Exercising Regularly

Regular exercise not only helps you lose weight and keep it off – it also keeps your appetite in check and improves your overall fitness. So pick an activity you enjoy, like running, brisk walking, aerobic dance, swimming, or cycling. Plan on at least 30 minutes, 3-5 times a week, and be sure your program includes warming up, aerobic conditioning for your heart and lungs, cooling down, and stretching.

Your Weight Control Checklist

As you begin your weight control plan, remember that weight loss doesn't happen overnight. Take it one day at a time, and you'll find that weight control does work – if you follow these steps.

Get Started. First see yourself differently – at the weight you'd like to be. There's a new, thinner you waiting to break through.

Know how much to lose. Find out what your ideal weight range is, so you can set a reasonable, healthy weight-loss goal.

Develop new habits. Once you know what, where, why, when, and how you eat, you can develop new, positive eating habits.

Balance eating and activity. Balance the calories you eat with the calories you burn off to maintain your ideal weight.

Keep records. Record your eating and activity habits to uncover your present patterns and help you chart your weight-loss progress.

Choose “thin” foods. When you do eat, choose a variety of foods from the “thin bin”: low in fat, sugar, and salt, and high in fiber.

The Thin Bin: Dive In!

Lean red meat
Poultry (no skin)
Tuna in water
White fish, salmon, halibut
Egg white
Low-fat and non-fat milk
Part-skim ricotta cheese
Part-skim mozzarella
Low-fat buttermilk
Plain, low-fat yogurt
Dried beans and peas (kidney, navy, lentils)
Tofu
Raw, fresh vegetables
Fresh or frozen vegetables (no sauce)
Fresh raw fruit
Whole grain cereals
Whole grain breads
Brown rice

A New, Thinner You

Once you’ve made the commitment to take control of your weight, you’re on the way to a new, thinner you. You can start by telling yourself you can do it. Then, with new eating habits, sound nutrition, and a balance of eating and activity, you can reach and maintain a comfortable, healthy weight for you.