

Maintaining a Healthy Weight



Maintaining a healthy weight is very important in managing type 2 diabetes. Doing so will help you control your blood glucose, blood pressure and blood fat levels. A healthy weight can help to reduce the risk of complications such as heart disease and stroke and simply makes you feel better, with more energy!

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

There are many ways to determine if you're at a healthy weight. Ask your health care team about your body mass index (BMI), waist measurement and weight goals.

Body Mass Index (BMI) compares a person's weight to their height. For most adults aged 18 to 64, a BMI of 25 or higher is overweight. This doesn't include women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, very muscular adults, or adults with a very lean build.

You can calculate your BMI using this formula:

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{weight (kg)}}{[\text{height (m)} \times \text{height (m)}]}$$

For example, if you weigh 69 kg and are 1.73 m tall, you have a BMI of approximately 23, which is a normal weight.

Waist Circumference (WC) is also important. Too much fat around the waist (apple shape) is linked to health problems such as heart disease and high blood pressure. WC goals differ depending on ethnic background and gender. In general, a healthy WC for men is less than 40 in (102 cm), and for women it is less than 35 in (88 cm).



Healthy eating and physical activity are key lifestyle factors in managing your weight.

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Lifestyle tips for a healthy weight

The key to reaching and staying at a healthy weight is to make lifestyle changes you can live with. Set realistic goals. Make one or two small changes at a time. When these changes are part of your daily routine, add new ones.



Goal	Tips	Changes I will make
Build exercise into your day	Exercise helps muscles use glucose and burn calories. Do aerobic exercises such as brisk walking, skiing, or biking for at least 150 minutes each week (e.g., 30 minutes, five days a week). If you can, increase the amount of time and intensity gradually. Add resistance exercises like lifting weights three times a week. Check with your family health care provider before starting.	
Eat only when hungry	Ask yourself if you are really hungry. Avoid eating out of habit, boredom or for emotional reasons. Try to figure out what it is that you really need.	
Create a healthy eating environment	Serve foods in the kitchen rather than at the table. Eat at the table rather than in front of the TV or computer. Eat slowly. It takes your brain about 20 minutes to realize that your stomach is full.	
Eat regular, balanced meals	Eating three meals a day reduces overeating. Start with a healthy breakfast. Meals should be spaced four to six hours apart and include foods from each of the food groups.	
Choose appropriate portions	Too much food, healthy or not, leads to weight gain. If you can, check your portions with measuring cups or scales. Talk to a dietitian about how much food is right for you.	
Eat fibre-rich foods	High-fibre foods may help keep you feeling full longer. Whole grains, vegetables, fruits and legumes (dried beans and lentils) are high in fibre.	
Choose healthy beverages and snacks	Satisfy thirst with water. Pop, sweetened hot or cold drinks, juice and alcohol can add many unwanted calories. Small snacks can help control hunger. Keep pre-cut vegetables and washed fruit handy for easy snacking. Avoid fried, salty and sugary snacks.	

Weight management challenges and possible solutions

Planning ahead means having solutions to deal with weight management challenges.

Challenges I might face	Possible solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't know how to start. • I don't feel ready to change. • I get discouraged and give up. • When I lose weight, I have trouble keeping it off. • I think my health condition prevents me from making lifestyle changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with a family health care provider to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> discuss your situation and readiness to change; set realistic goals and develop a personal plan; and help you with your challenges.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My family and friends sometimes sabotage my efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss your goals with friends and family. Suggest how they can help. Look for support and/or resources in your community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I make unhealthy choices when stressed, bored or emotional. • I don't know what or how much to eat. • I don't have time to be active and/or to eat well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan ahead (e.g., make weekly menus and grocery lists, schedule time for exercise). • Keep track of things that affect your choices.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel deprived when I follow a "diet". • It's hard to eat healthy and/or keep active when away from home. • Keeping active and eating well is too expensive. • Others: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about eating sensible portions and balanced meals and snacks. Avoid fad diets. For more information, refer to the "Healthy Eating: The Basics" fact sheet in this kit. • Save money: Shop with a list to get only what you need for nutritious meals, avoiding impulse buys. Buy fruits and vegetables economically – fresh when in season, frozen when they aren't. You don't need to join a gym to stay active; brisk walks will help you achieve the same results. • Others:



Each person's body has its own size and shape. Feel good about yourself and the lifestyle changes you make. Remember to think long-term, but make changes gradually.

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Special considerations for people with diabetes

People with diabetes must balance a healthy weight with blood glucose levels that fall within target range. Talk to your health care team about what is right for you.

- Weight loss and lifestyle changes can affect blood glucose control. Find out how by testing your blood glucose level at recommended times and tracking your progress. Diabetes medications may need to be reviewed.
- Try not to let the fear of low blood glucose prevent you from being physically active and/or eating smaller servings.
- Some diabetes medications may affect weight.
- Some complications such as high blood pressure, foot ulcers or eye damage may change the types of exercises you can do.
- If lifestyle changes do not lead to appropriate weight loss, talk to your health care team about other options.

For more information on maintaining a healthy weight, watch the “Managing Your Weight” video, which is part of this kit.

My weight management numbers

My BMI: _____

My target BMI: _____

My waist measurement: _____

My target waist measurement: _____

My current weight: _____

My 5 to 10 per cent weight loss: _____



You are at a higher risk if you carry most of your weight around the abdomen. If you are overweight, losing 5 to 10 per cent of your current body weight at a rate of 2 to 4 lbs (1 to 2 kg) per month is a healthy goal. For someone who weighs 200 lbs (90 kg), 5 to 10 per cent is 10 to 20 lbs (4.5 to 9 kg).