



Fact Sheet

Student Health Services, Texas A&M University

Safe and Healthy Weight Loss

Weight loss occurs when more energy is expended than consumed. For example, to lose one pound a week, which is 3500 calories, there should be a deficit of 500 calories a day (either by expending more calories through physical activity or consuming fewer calories overall).

$$\begin{array}{l} \mathbf{500 \quad x \quad 7 \quad = \quad 3500 \text{ calories}} \\ \text{(caloric loss/day) x (\# days/ week) = (equals one pound)} \end{array}$$

- Safe, long lasting weight loss is 1/2 to 2 pounds per week.
- Soft drinks and alcohol only contribute “empty calories”--energy *without* nutrients. Try to cut back.
- You need at least 8-8 ounce glasses of water per day (about a half gallon) to keep your body hydrated. Drink lots of water.
- Foods prepared in dining establishments are usually high in fat and calories and are very large portions. Limit dining out or make healthful choices in restaurants. Take some of it home or split with a friend.
- The stomach takes about 20 minutes to tell the brain that it is full. Try to eat slowly.
- Enjoying or eating healthful snacks between meals helps prevent overeating at mealtime.

Small changes can make a **BIG** difference, for example:

- use mustard instead of mayonnaise
- do not cook vegetables in butter
- bake foods instead of frying
- watch portion size

Follow the Food Guide Pyramid to make healthy choices at mypyramid.gov.

Daily caloric intake should include:

- 55-60% of carbohydrates
- 10-15% of protein
- <30% of fat

Good choices for carbohydrates include:

- Whole grains, breads, cereals
- A variety of fruits and vegetables

Good choices for protein include:

- Dairy products
- Beans (legumes)
- Lean meats (should end in "round or loin") *cut off visible fats from meat

Good to know about fat:

- Watch portion sizes
- Choose reduced fat milk or skim milk (1% - skim: same nutrients, minus the fat!)
- High fat foods are usually high in calories
- Fat is needed by the body, and should not be completely eliminated from the diet

Physical Activity

- Participate in enjoyable physical activity for at least 30 minutes, most days of the week
- Work out with a partner to keep you motivated
- Make worthwhile changes (for example: take the stairs instead of the elevator or park farther away at the grocery store)

Weight Loss Survival Tips

- Make health a priority
- Set realistic goals that work for you
- Make positive, gradual changes
- Keep a journal to keep track of your progress, set-backs, thoughts, and feelings
- Expect ups and downs: reward yourself for the ups and learn from downs
- If you are craving something, satisfy yourself. By keeping the portion size small, you will satisfy the craving and keep the calories down.
- Focus on the way healthful eating and exercise make you feel
- Expect to be successful

Dieting implies a beginning and an end. In order to lose weight and keep it off, lifestyle changes must be made.

Healthy eating habits and regular physical activity will help improve the way you look and feel.

***Healthful eating* and *physical activity* are the keys to safe, lifelong weight loss.**