

Setting Goals for Weight Loss



Partnership for
Healthy Weight
Management

www.consumer.gov/weightloss
February 1999

There are lots of reasons for people who are overweight or obese to lose weight. To be healthier. To look better. To feel better. To have more energy.

No matter what the reason, successful weight loss and healthy weight management depend on sensible goals and expectations. If you set sensible goals for yourself, chances are you'll be more likely to meet them and have a better chance of keeping the weight off. In fact, losing even five to 10 percent of your weight is the kind of goal that can help improve your health.

Most overweight people should lose weight gradually. For safe and healthy weight loss, try not to exceed a rate of two pounds per week. Sometimes, people with serious health problems associated with obesity may have legitimate reasons for losing weight rapidly. If so, a physician's supervision is required.

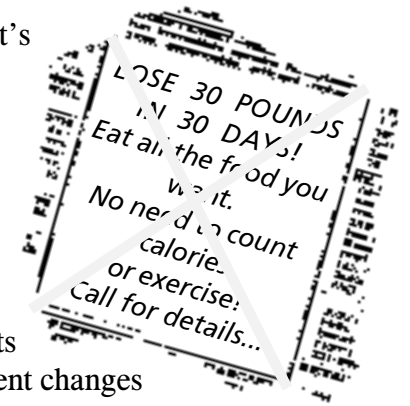
What you weigh is the result of several factors:

- how much and what kinds of food you eat
- whether your lifestyle includes regular physical activity
- whether you use food to respond to stress and other situations in your life
- your physiologic and genetic make-up
- your age and health status.

Successful weight loss and weight management should address all of these

factors. And that's the reason to ignore products and programs that promise quick and easy results, or that promise permanent results

without permanent changes in your lifestyle. Any ad that says you can lose weight without lowering the calories you take in and/or increasing your physical activity is selling fantasy and false hope. In fact, some people would call it fraud. Furthermore, the use of some products may not be safe.



A REALISTIC APPROACH

Many people who are overweight or obese have decided not to diet per se, but to concentrate on engaging in regular physical activity and maintaining healthy eating habits in accordance with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, emphasizing lowered fat consumption, and an increase in vegetables, fruits and whole grains. Others — who try to diet — report needing help to achieve their weight management goals.

Fad diets that ignore the principles of the Dietary Guidelines may result in short term weight loss, but may do so at the risk of your health. How you go about managing your weight has a lot to do with your long-

term success. Unless your health is seriously at risk due to complications from being overweight or obese, gradual weight loss should be your rule — and your goal. Here’s how to do it:

- ☛ Check with your doctor. Make sure that your health status allows lowering your caloric intake and increasing your physical activity.
- ☛ Follow a calorie-reduced, but balanced diet that provides for as little as one or two pounds of weight loss a week. Be sure to include at least five servings a day of fruits and vegetables, along with whole grains, lean meat and low fat dairy products. It may not produce headlines, but it can reduce waistlines. It’s not “miracle” science — just common sense. Most important, it’s prudent and healthy.
- ☛ Make time in your day for some form of physical activity. Start by taking the stairs at work, walking up or down an escalator, parking at the far end of a lot instead of cruising around for the closest spot. Then, assuming your physician gives the okay, gradually add some form of regular physical activity that you enjoy. Walking is an excellent form of physical activity that almost everyone can do.
- ☛ Consider the benefits of moderate weight loss. There’s scientific evidence that losing five to 10 percent of your weight and keeping it off can benefit your health — lower your blood pressure, for example. If you

are 5 feet 6 inches tall and weigh 180 pounds, and your goal weight is 150, losing five to 10 percent (nine to 18 pounds) is beneficial. When it comes to successful weight loss and weight management, steady and slow can be the way to go.

For many people who are overweight or obese, long-term — and healthy — weight management generally requires sensible goals and a commitment to make realistic changes in their lifestyle and improve their health. A lifestyle based on healthy eating and regular physical activity can be a real lifesaver.

DETERMINING YOUR WEIGHT/ HEALTH PROFILE

Overweight and obesity have been associated with increased risk of developing such conditions as high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes and coronary artery disease.

For most people, determining the circumference of your waist and your body mass index (BMI) are reliable ways to estimate your body fat and the health risks associated with being overweight, overfat or obese. BMI is reliable for most people between 19 and 70 years of age *except* women who are pregnant or breast feeding, competitive athletes, body builders, and chronically ill patients. Generally, the higher your BMI, the higher your health risk, and the risk increases even further if your waist size is greater than 40 inches for men or 35 inches for women. There are other ways, besides BMI, to determine your body fat composition, and your doctor can tell you about them, but the method recommended here will help you decide if you are at risk. Use the chart at the end of this brochure to determine your BMI. Then, measure your waist size. Now, with your BMI and waist size determined, use the table below to determine your health risk relative to normal weight.

RISK OF ASSOCIATED DISEASE ACCORDING TO BMI AND WAIST SIZE

<u>BMI</u>		<u>Waist less than or equal to 40 in. (men) or 35 in. (women)</u>	<u>Waist greater than 40 in. (men) or 35 in. (women)</u>
18.5 or less	Underweight	—	N/A
18.5 - 24.9	Normal	—	N/A
25.0 - 29.9	Overweight	Increased	High
30.0 - 34.9	Obese	High	Very High
35.0 - 39.9	Obese	Very High	Very High
40 or greater	Extremely Obese	Extremely High	Extremely High

Several other factors, including your medical history, can increase your health risk.

See your doctor for advice about your overall health risk and the weight loss options that are best for you. Together, decide whether you should go on a moderate diet (1200 calories daily for women, 1400 calories daily for men), or whether other options might be appropriate.

Once you and your doctor have determined the type of diet that makes the most sense for you, you may want to choose a product or a plan to help you reach your goal.

Consider:

- ☼ If your doctor prescribes a medication, ask about complications or side effects, and tell the doctor what other medications, including over-the-counter drug products, and dietary supplements you take and other conditions you're being treated for. After you start taking the medication, tell the doctor about changes you experience, if any.
- ☼ If your treatment includes periodic monitoring, counseling or other activities that require your attendance, make sure the location is easy to get to and the appointment times are convenient.

- ☼ Some methods for losing weight have more risks and complications than others. Ask for details about the side effects, complications or risks of any product or service that promotes weight loss and how to deal with problems should they occur.
- ☼ Where appropriate to the program, ask about the credentials and training of the program staff.
- ☼ Ask for an itemized price list for *all the costs* of the plan you're considering, including membership fees, fees for weekly visits, the costs of any diagnostic tests, costs for meal replacements, foods, nutritional supplements, or other products that are part of the weight loss program or plan.



WHERE TO GET MORE HELP

The Partnership for Healthy Weight Management is a coalition of representatives from science, academia, the health care professions, government, commercial enterprises, and organizations whose mission is to promote sound guidance on strategies for achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.

Partners with information that can help you with issues about overweight and obesity or design your own healthy weight management plan are:

American Dietetic Association
Get Nutrition Fact Sheets at:
American Dietetic Association
Consumer Education Team
216 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60606

(Send self-addressed stamped envelope),
Call 800-877-1600, ext. 5000 for other
publications or 800-366-1655 for recorded
food/nutrition messages.

www.eatright.org

American Obesity Association
1250 24th Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20037
800-98-OBESE

www.obesity.org

The Council on Size and Weight Discrimination
PO Box 305
Mt. Marion, NY 12456
(Send self-addressed stamped envelope)

www.cswd.org

BODY MASS INDEX (BMI)

Body mass index, or BMI, is a new term to most people. However, it is the measurement of choice for many physicians and researchers studying obesity. BMI uses a mathematical formula that takes into account both a person's height and weight. BMI equals a person's weight in kilograms divided by height in meters squared. (BMI = kg/m²). The table printed here has already done the math and metric conversions.

To use the table, find the appropriate height in the left-hand column. Move across the row to the given weight. The number at the top of the column is the BMI for that height and weight.

BMI (kg/m ²)	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	35	40
Height (in.)	Weight (lb.)													
58	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	167	191
59	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	173	198
60	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	179	204
61	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	185	211
62	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	191	218
63	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	197	225
64	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	204	232
65	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	210	240
66	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	216	247
67	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	223	255
68	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	230	262
69	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	236	270
70	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	207	243	278
71	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	250	286
72	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	258	294
73	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	265	302
74	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	272	311
75	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	279	319
76	156	164	172	180	189	197	205	213	221	230	238	246	287	328

Body weight in pounds according to height and body mass index.

Adapted with permission from Bray, G.A., Gray, D.S., Obesity, Part I, Pathogenesis, West J. Med. 1988: 149: 429-41.

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Federal Trade Commission
Consumer Response Center
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20580
202-FTC-HELP
www.ftc.gov

National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive
and Kidney Diseases
31 Center Drive
Bethesda, MD 20892
301-496-3583
www.niddk.nih.gov

North American Association for the Study
of Obesity
8630 Fenton Street
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Shape Up America!
www.shapeup.org

For access to helpful information from our
commercial partners, write:
Federal Trade Commission
Consumer and Business Education Office
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20580



Visit consumer.gov/weightloss for
more information and links to the
Partners' web sites.