

WIN

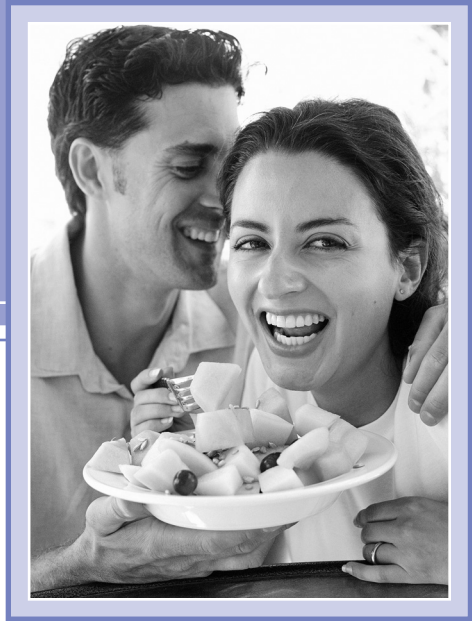
Weight-control Information Network

Weight Loss *for* Life



National Institute of
Diabetes and Digestive
and Kidney Diseases

Weight Loss for Life



T There are many ways to lose weight, but it is not always easy to keep the weight off. The key to successful weight loss is making changes in your eating and physical activity habits that you can keep up for the rest of your life. The information presented here may help put you on the road to healthy habits.

Can I benefit from weight loss?

Health experts agree that you may gain health benefits from even a small weight loss if:

- ◆ You are considered obese based on your body mass index (BMI) (see BMI chart on page 3).
- ◆ You are considered overweight based on your BMI and have weight-related health problems or a family history of such problems.
- ◆ You have a waist that measures more than 40 inches if you are a man or more than 35 inches if you are a woman.

A weight loss of 5 to 7 percent of body weight may improve your health and quality of life, and it may prevent weight-related health problems, like type 2 diabetes. For a person who weighs 200 pounds, this means losing 10 to 14 pounds.

Some Weight-related Health Problems

- ✓ diabetes
- ✓ heart disease or stroke
- ✓ high blood pressure
- ✓ high cholesterol
- ✓ gallbladder disease
- ✓ some types of cancer
- ✓ osteoarthritis
(wearing away of the joints)
- ✓ sleep apnea
(interrupted breathing during sleep)

Even if you do not need to lose weight, you should still follow healthy eating and physical activity habits to help prevent weight gain and keep you healthy over the years.

Body Mass Index

BMI is a tool that is often used to determine whether a person's health is at risk due to his or her weight. It is a ratio of your weight to your height. A BMI of 18.5 to 24.9 is considered healthy, a BMI of 25 to 29.9

is considered overweight, and a BMI of 30 or more is considered obese. You can find your BMI using the chart below, and you can also see the weight range that is healthy for your height.

	Normal						Overweight						Obese										Extreme Obesity		
BMI	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	
Height													Body Weight (pounds)												
58"	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	148	153	158	162	167	172	177	181	186	191	196	201	
59"	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	173	178	183	188	193	198	203	208	
60"	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	174	179	184	189	194	199	204	209	215	
61"	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	164	169	174	180	185	190	195	201	206	211	217	222	
62"	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	169	175	180	186	191	196	202	207	213	218	224	229	
63"	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	175	180	186	191	197	203	208	214	220	225	231	237	
64"	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	180	186	192	197	204	209	215	221	227	232	238	244	
65"	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	186	192	198	204	210	216	222	228	234	240	246	252	
66"	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	192	198	204	210	216	223	229	235	241	247	253	260	
67"	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	198	204	211	217	223	230	236	242	249	255	261	268	
68"	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	203	210	216	223	230	236	243	249	256	262	269	276	
69"	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	209	216	223	230	236	243	250	257	263	270	277	284	
70"	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216	222	229	236	243	250	257	264	271	278	285	292	
71"	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222	229	236	243	250	257	265	272	279	286	293	301	
72"	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	228	235	242	250	258	265	272	279	287	294	302	309	
73"	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	235	242	250	257	265	272	280	288	295	302	310	318	
74"	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	241	249	256	264	272	280	287	295	303	311	319	326	
75"	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	248	256	264	272	279	287	295	303	311	319	327	335	
76"	156	164	172	180	189	197	205	213	221	230	238	246	254	263	271	279	287	295	304	312	320	328	336	344	

Source: Adapted from *Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults. The Evidence Report*. NIH Publication No. 98-4083: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; 1998.

How can I lose weight?

To lose weight you need to take in fewer calories than you use. You can do this by creating and following a plan for healthy eating and a plan for regular physical activity.

You may also choose to follow a formal weight-loss program that can help you make lifelong changes in your eating and physical activity habits. See page 6 for more information on weight-loss programs.

Your Plan for Healthy Eating

It may be hard to stick to a weight-loss “diet” that limits your portions to very small sizes or excludes certain foods. You may have difficulty making that work over the long term. Instead, a healthy eating plan takes into account your likes and dislikes, and includes a variety of foods that give you enough calories and nutrients for good health.

Make sure your healthy eating plan is one that:

- ◆ Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products.
- ◆ Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts.
- ◆ Is low in saturated fats, *trans* fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars.

The **Nutrition Facts** label from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is found on most packaged foods. It tells you how many calories and how much fat, protein, carbohydrate, and other nutrients are in one serving of the food. For more information on the Nutrition Facts, see “Other Resources” at the end of this brochure.

For more specific information about food groups and nutrition values, visit <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/>.

Your Plan for Regular Physical Activity

Regular physical activity may help you lose weight and keep it off. It may also improve your energy level and mood, and lower your risk for developing heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers.

According to the *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*, experts believe all adults should be physically active. Some activity is better than none, and individuals who engage in any amount of physical activity may gain some health benefits. The majority of your physical activity should be moderate to vigorous in intensity. However, adults should aim to include muscle-strengthening activities as well. For more information on the *Physical Activity Guidelines*, see the “Other Resources” section at the end of this brochure.

You can be physically active every day for one extended period of time, or you can break it up into shorter sessions of 20, 15, or even 10 minutes. Try some of these physical activities:

- ◆ walking
(15 minutes per mile or 4 miles per hour)
- ◆ biking
- ◆ tennis
- ◆ aerobic exercise classes (step aerobics, kick boxing, dancing)
- ◆ energetic house or yard work (gardening, raking, mopping, vacuuming)





You can follow a nonclinical program on your own by using a counselor, book, website, or weight-loss product. You can also join others in a support group, worksite program, or community-

What types of weight-loss programs are available?

There are two different types of weight-loss programs—clinical and nonclinical. Knowing what a good program will offer and what to look for may help you choose a weight-loss program that will work for you.

Nonclinical Program

What it is: A nonclinical program may be commercially operated, such as a privately owned weight-loss chain.

based program. Nonclinical weight-loss programs may require you to use the program's foods or supplements.

What a safe and effective program will offer:

- ◆ Books, pamphlets, and websites that are written or reviewed by a licensed health professional such as a medical doctor (M.D.) or registered dietitian (R.D.).
- ◆ Balanced information about following a healthy eating plan and getting regular physical activity.

- ◆ Leaders or counselors who show you their training credentials. (Program leaders or counselors may not be licensed health professionals.)

Program cautions:

- ◆ If a program requires you to buy prepackaged meals, find out how much the meals will cost—they may be expensive. Also, eating prepackaged meals does not let you learn the food selection and cooking skills you will need to maintain weight loss over the long term.
- ◆ Avoid any diet that suggests you eat a certain formula, food, or combination of foods for easy weight loss. Some of these diets may work in the short term because they are low in calories. But they may not give you all the nutrients your body needs and they do not teach healthy eating habits.



- ◆ Avoid programs that do not include a physical activity plan.
- ◆ Talk to your health care provider before using any weight-loss product, such as a supplement, herb, or over-the-counter medication.

Clinical Program

What it is: A clinical program provides services in a health care setting, such as a hospital. One or more licensed health professionals, such as medical doctors, nurses, registered dietitians, and psychologists, provide



care. A clinical program may or may not be commercially owned.

Clinical programs may offer services such as nutrition education, physical activity, and behavior change therapy. Some programs offer prescription weight-loss drugs or gastrointestinal surgery.

Prescription Weight-loss Drugs

If your BMI is 30 or more, or your BMI is 27 or more and you have weight-related health problems, you may

consider using prescription weight-loss drugs. Drugs should be used as part of an overall program that includes long-term changes in eating and physical activity habits. Only a licensed health care provider can prescribe these drugs. See “Additional Reading” for more information about prescription medications for the treatment of obesity.

Bariatric Surgery

If your BMI is 40 or more, or your BMI is 35 or more and you have weight-related health problems such as diabetes or heart disease, you may consider bariatric surgery (also called gastrointestinal surgery). Most patients lose weight quickly. To keep the weight off, most will need to eat healthy and get regular physical activity over the long term. Surgery may also reduce the amount of vitamins and minerals that are absorbed by your body. The rapid weight loss as a result of bariatric surgery

may also cause gallstones. See the “Additional Reading” section for more information about bariatric surgery.

What a safe and effective program will offer:

- ◆ A team of licensed health professionals.
- ◆ A plan to help you keep weight off after you have lost it.

Program cautions:

There may be side effects or health risks involved in the program that can be serious. Discuss these with your health care provider.

Regardless of the type of weight-loss program you choose, be sure you have follow-up visits with your health care provider. He or she may suggest ways to deal with setbacks or obstacles you may face along the way, as well as answer any questions you may have as you move forward.

For more detailed information about choosing a safe and successful weight-loss program, see the “Additional Reading” section at the end of this brochure.

**It is not always easy to change your eating
and physical activity habits.
You may have setbacks along the way.
But keep trying—you can do it!**

Additional Reading

From the Weight-control Information Network

Active at Any Size

describes the benefits of being physically active no matter what a person's size. The brochure presents a variety of activities that large people can enjoy safely.

Bariatric Surgery for Severe Obesity describes the different types of surgery available to treat severe obesity. It explains how gastrointestinal surgery promotes weight loss and the benefits and risks of each procedure.

Changing Your Habits: Steps to Better Health guides readers through steps that can help them determine what “stage” they are in—how ready they are—to make healthy lifestyle changes. Once that stage is determined, strategies on how to make healthy eating and physical activity changes are offered.

Just Enough for You

describes the difference between a portion—the amount of food a person chooses to eat—and a measured serving. It offers tips for judging portion sizes and for controlling portions at home and when eating out.

Prescription Medications for the Treatment of Obesity

presents information on medications that suppress appetite or reduce the body's ability to absorb dietary fat. The types of medications and the risks and benefits of each are described.

Walking...A Step in the Right Direction

offers tips for getting started on a walking program and illustrates warm-up stretching exercises. It also includes a sample walking program.

Other Resources

U.S. Department of Agriculture. ChooseMyPlate.
Go to <http://www.choosemyplate.gov>.

U.S. Food and Drug Administration Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition. *How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label*. November 2004. Available at <http://www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackagingLabeling/LabelingNutrition/ucm274593.htm>.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*. October 2008. Available at <http://www.health.gov/PAGuidelines>.

National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, National Institutes of Health (NIH). *Diabetes Prevention Program*. DHHS. NIH Publication No. 09-5099. 2008.

Weight-control Information Network

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Publications produced by WIN are reviewed by both NIDDK scientists and outside experts. This publication was also reviewed by F. Xavier Pi-Sunyer, M.D., M.P.H., Director, New York Obesity Research Center, St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center, and English H. Gonzalez, M.D., M.P.H., Community Medicine and Curriculum Development Coordinator, St. Vincent's East Family Medicine Residency Program in Birmingham, AL.

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