

Health Bulletin

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

#91 in a series of Health Bulletins on issues of pressing interest to all New Yorkers

How to Lose Weight



And Keep It Off



How to Lose Weight

Being overweight or obese can lead to many health problems, including diabetes, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, arthritis and even cancer. The good news is that losing even a *few* pounds can cut these risks.

Use more calories than you take in.

- The number of calories a person needs depends on age, gender and activity level. Most adults need 2,000 or fewer calories each day.
- If you take in more calories than you use, you will gain weight over time.
- If you use more calories than you take in, you will lose weight over time.
- To find out what *you* need, go to myplate.gov.

Do it for life.

- To lose weight and keep it off, make small changes you can stick with long term.



Tips for Healthy Weight Loss

1. Take your time.

- Aim to lose about 1 to 2 pounds a week. It's safer to lose weight slowly and easier to keep it off.
- Don't be tempted by quick weight-loss fixes. They don't usually work for long, and some are dangerous.
- Aim for changes you can stick with long term.

2. Cut your portions.

- Never eat out of the bag or box, or drink straight from the bottle. Always put food on a plate and pour your drink into a glass.
- Don't eat in front of the TV or computer. You're more likely to overeat if your attention is on something else.
- Try to eat in one place, preferably at the table.

3. Stay away from sugary drinks.

- One 20-ounce sugary drink has about 250 empty calories (no nutritional value).
- Drink water, unsweetened tea or low-fat milk.



4. Eat more meals at home.

- It's easier to control what you eat when you prepare your own food.
- Home-cooked meals are usually more nutritious and less expensive.
- Keep it interesting; try new, healthy foods – for example, fruits, vegetables or whole grains you've never tried.
- Check the labels on packaged foods, especially serving size and calories per serving. Remember, most adults need 2,000 or fewer calories a day.

5. Choose smaller portions when eating out.

- Some restaurant entrees and fast-food meals have more than 1,500 calories – almost as many calories as you should have for the whole day!
- When you do eat out, watch out for large portions. Share a main course with a friend, or take half home.
- Order a small size whenever you can.
- Choose healthier items, like salad (but ask for dressing on the side).



6. Eat more fruits and vegetables.

- Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables.
- They help keep you healthy – and fill you up on very few calories.

7. Feel full on fewer calories.

- Choose high-fiber foods: fruits, vegetables, beans and lentils, and whole-grain cereals, breads and pasta.
- Have a broth-based soup or green salad at the start of a meal.
- Eat slowly. It takes about 20 minutes to start feeling full. People who eat too fast often eat too many calories.



8. Avoid unhealthy snacks like cookies, candy or chips.

- If you must snack, choose fresh fruit or vegetables.



9. Get moving.

- Physical activity improves mood and health – even if you don't lose weight.
- Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity 5 days a week, such as brisk walking or biking.
- Just walking burns calories, improves heart health and strengthens muscles.
- You don't have to join a gym or buy expensive equipment. Make NYC your gym!
- Get off the bus or subway one stop early and walk the rest of the way.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- For free or low-cost fitness activities near you, visit BeFitNYC.org.



Small Changes Can Help You Lose Weight

Instead of	Choose	If you do this	You could lose this many pounds a year*
Use the elevator or escalator	Climb stairs for 2 minutes	Once a day	2
Use a tablespoon of mayonnaise on your sandwich	Use mustard	3 times a week	4
Eat a large fries	Substitute a <i>small</i> fries	Once a week	4
Watch a lot of TV	Do some housework	1/2 hour a day	6
Drink 8 ounces whole milk	Drink 8 ounces <i>non-fat</i> milk	Once a day	6
Snack on a 2-ounce chocolate bar	Have a piece of fruit	Twice a week	6
Drive or take a taxi, bus or subway	Walk briskly for 20 minutes	Once a day	8
Eat a 3-egg cheese omelet with bacon, toast and hash browns	Have a bowl of cereal with <i>non-fat</i> milk	Once a week	8
Drink a 16-ounce latte with whole milk	Drink a 16-ounce latte with <i>non-fat</i> milk	Once a day	9
Drink a can of regular soda	Have a glass of water	Once a day	10
Eat a pint of ice cream	Substitute a half-pint of sorbet	Once a week	11

* Individual weight loss may vary.

More Information

- **New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene:** nyc.gov and search for healthy eating, or call 311
- **Free or low-cost fitness activities:** BeFitNYC.org or call 311
- **Dietary guidelines:** health.gov/dietaryguidelines
- **Physical activity:** cdc.gov/physicalactivity
- **Healthy eating:** myplate.gov

**DIAL
311**

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