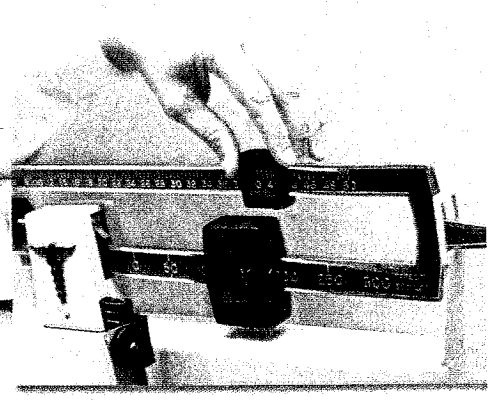
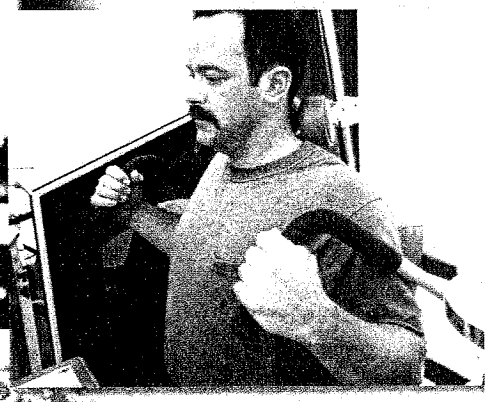
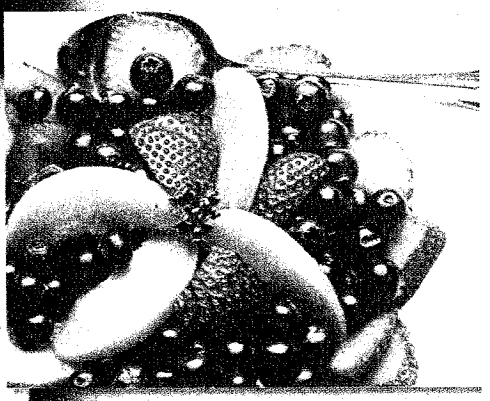


# Taking Control of Your Weight



A black and white photograph of a woman with long dark hair, wearing a white bathrobe, standing on a scale. She is looking down at the scale. The background is a plain wall.

## What is weight management?

It's taking steps to make sure you have a healthy amount of body fat. Weight management means losing excess fat—and keeping it off.

### Too much body fat can harm your health.

Your body needs some fat to work properly. But too much fat puts you at risk for many serious health problems.

### Assessing your weight is a way to see how much body fat you have.

In general, being:

- overweight means having moderately more body fat than is healthy
- obese means having much more body fat than is healthy.

(There can be exceptions. See page 8.)

### Weight management is a long-term effort.

Successful weight management means:

- losing weight (if needed) in a steady, safe way
- maintaining a healthy weight for life.

### Some people may need to gain weight,

since being too thin can be a health risk, too. This booklet will not cover how to gain weight. If you think you may need to gain weight, talk with your health-care provider for advice.

**With information, help and a can-do spirit, you can succeed in managing your weight!**

## Why is it important to manage your weight?

Because your health depends on it.



### Overweight and obesity are related to many health problems.

These include:

- high blood pressure
- heart disease
- diabetes
- stroke (brain attack)
- certain cancers
- other problems—such as gallbladder disease, joint diseases and breathing disorders.

You are less likely to have these health problems if you maintain a healthy weight.

### Even a modest weight loss can bring important benefits.

If you're overweight or obese, losing just 5-10 percent of your weight can make a big difference to your health. Most people can achieve—and maintain—this much weight loss. With effort and help, you can, too!

### Focus on health—not body shape—as you manage your weight.

TV, movies, magazines, cultural beliefs and other influences may lead us to believe that to be attractive a person must have a certain body shape. But that shape may or may not be healthy. For example, being thin is not the same as being healthy.

It's natural to care about your appearance. But keep in mind that attractive bodies come in many shapes and sizes. Avoid aiming for a specific shape or size when managing your weight. Instead, focus on keeping your weight in a range that's healthy for you.





## What causes overweight and obesity?

Often, several factors work together to cause a person's weight problem. These may include:

### How much someone eats and drinks

Consuming more calories than the body needs means the extra calories are stored in the body as fat. The number of calories someone needs depends on how much physical activity he or she gets—as well as other factors, like his or her gender and age. (More on page 12.)

### What someone eats and drinks

Foods and beverages that are high in fats or sugars are also generally high in calories. Having too much of them can add so many calories that it's hard for the body to use them up. Fats have about double the calories that protein and carbohydrates do!

### Not enough exercise

Being physically active “burns” (uses up) calories. So not getting enough physical activity generally means you're taking in more calories than you're burning. And that means weight gain.

### Other factors

These include:

- genetics—some people may inherit genes that make it easier for them to gain weight
- uncomfortable feelings—boredom, sadness, anger, stress, etc., can lead some people to eat too much
- certain illnesses—in a small number of cases, depression, thyroid problems, other illnesses or certain medications can lead to unhealthy weight gains.

### Age makes a difference.

Keep in mind that as you age, your body generally needs fewer calories. If you continue to eat as much as when you were younger—and don't exercise more—you're likely to gain weight.

**Most weight problems are caused by eating or exercise habits—often both.**



# What's involved in weight management?

A combination of methods usually works best. These include:



## Healthy eating

Adopting and maintaining healthy eating habits is a must for weight management. This means eating a variety of healthy foods in healthy amounts. It does **not** mean forbidding yourself from enjoying food. (See pages 12-17 for more on healthy eating.)

## Regular physical activity

Getting enough physical activity is also vital to weight management. You don't have to be an athlete. Even moderate levels of physical activity can make a big difference.

There are plenty of activities that might fit your interests and needs. Your health-care team can help you choose. (See pages 18-21 for more.)

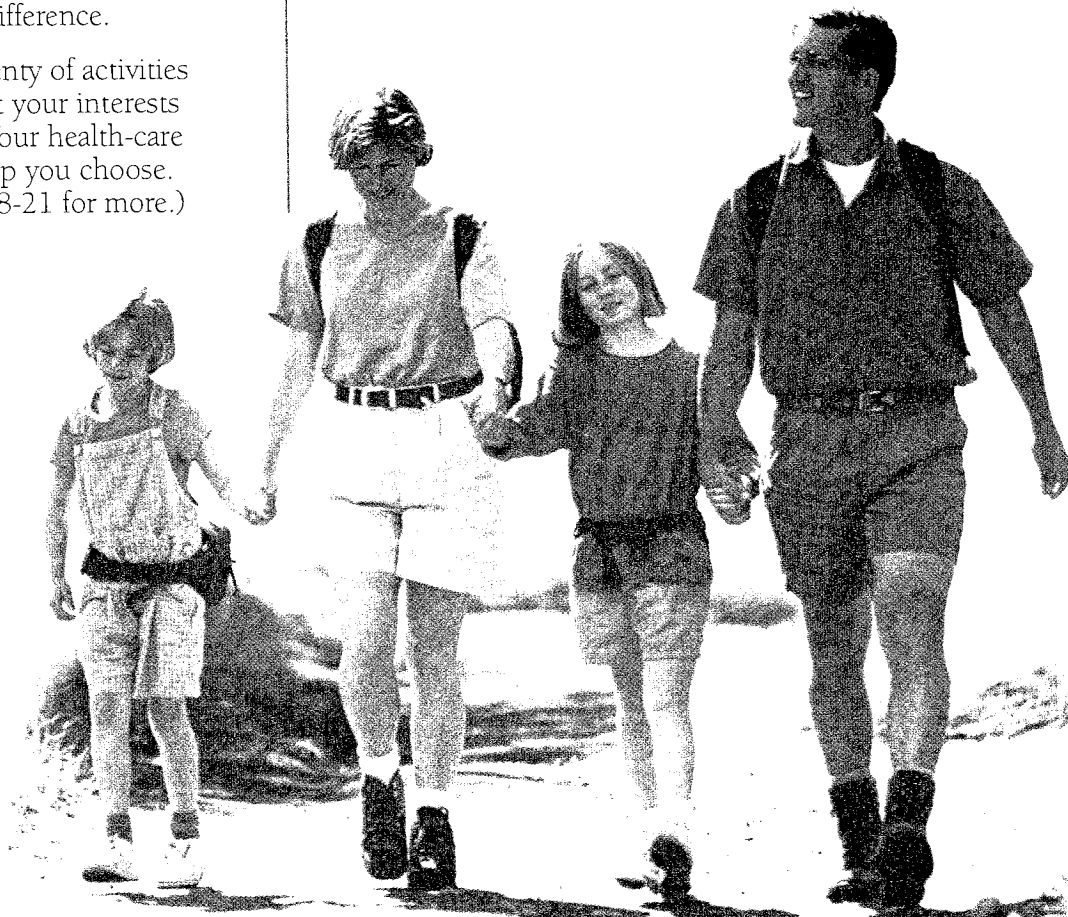
## Additional steps

These may include:

- counseling—for example, to help change attitudes and behaviors that may get in the way of successful weight management
- other treatments—such as weight-loss medications (see pages 22-23), very low-calorie diets (special liquid diets) and stomach surgery.

Ask your health-care team for details.

**Finding a balance between food and physical activity is the key to a healthy weight. It's important even if genes or illnesses play a role in your weight problem.**



# Healthy eating

is a major part of weight management.  
A healthy diet combines:

## Variety

Choose from each of the food groups every day. Different foods provide different nutrients—the vitamins, minerals, proteins, carbohydrates, fiber and other things you need.

## Moderation

For example, limit fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), added sugars and calories with no nutritional value.\*

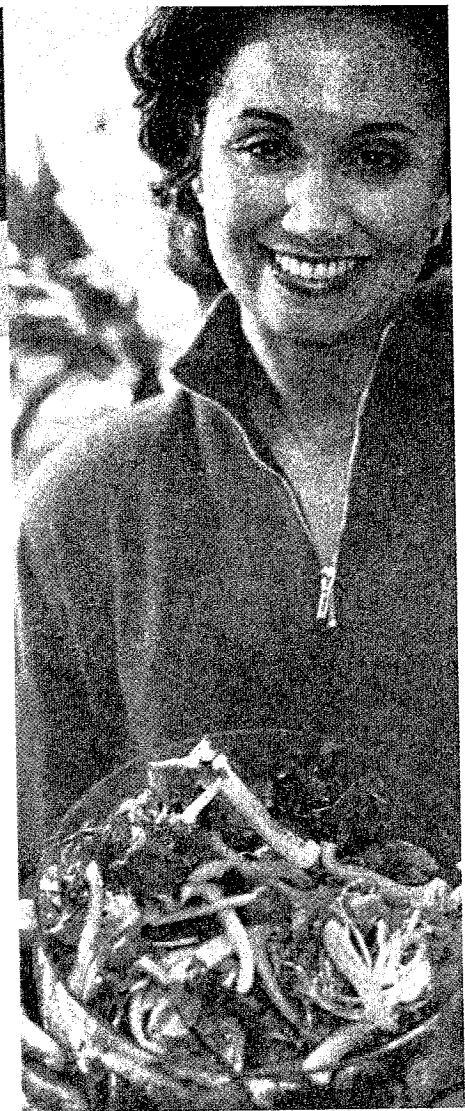
\*Do not restrict fat for children under age 2. Ask your health-care provider about other nutritional needs for young children.

## Proportion

For example, have more grains, vegetables and fruits than meats and high-fat foods.

## Activity

Find a healthy balance between what you eat and your physical activity.



## Stay within your daily calorie needs.

Ask your health-care provider how many calories are right for you. (Record this on page 15.) This chart estimates calorie needs for maintaining weight. (These recommendations are general guidelines—your individual needs may be different.) The lower number of calories is for people who aren't active—the higher number for people who are active. Keep in mind that, in general, to lose weight, you should eat fewer calories than your body uses up.



	Age	Daily calories
<b>Child</b>	2-3	1,000-1,400
<b>Female</b>	4-8	1,200-1,800
	9-13	1,400-2,200
	14-30	1,800-2,400
	31-50	1,800-2,200
	51+	1,600-2,200
<b>Male</b>	4-8	1,200-2,000
	9-13	1,600-2,600
	14-18	2,000-3,200
	19-30	2,400-3,000
	31-50	2,200-3,000
	51+	2,000-2,800

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Go to [www.MyPyramid.gov](http://www.MyPyramid.gov) or talk to your health-care provider for a personal nutrition plan.



### Tips to limit calories:

- Have smaller portions at home and at restaurants. Servings are often bigger than people need.
- Eat more slowly so the feeling of fullness has time to catch up with you.
- Snack on fruits and vegetables. Not only are they good for you, but they have lots of fiber and water in them, making them more filling.
- Limit foods and drinks that are high in fats or sugars (such as sweets and soft drinks). Also limit alcoholic drinks.
- Instead of eating when you're bored or stressed, call a friend, work on a hobby, take a walk, etc.

### Why limit fats?

Fats and oils are part of a healthy diet. But having too much—especially of certain kinds—can:

- make it hard for you to stay within your daily calorie needs—fats have more calories
- raise your risk of health problems, like heart disease.

It's especially important to limit saturated and trans fats.

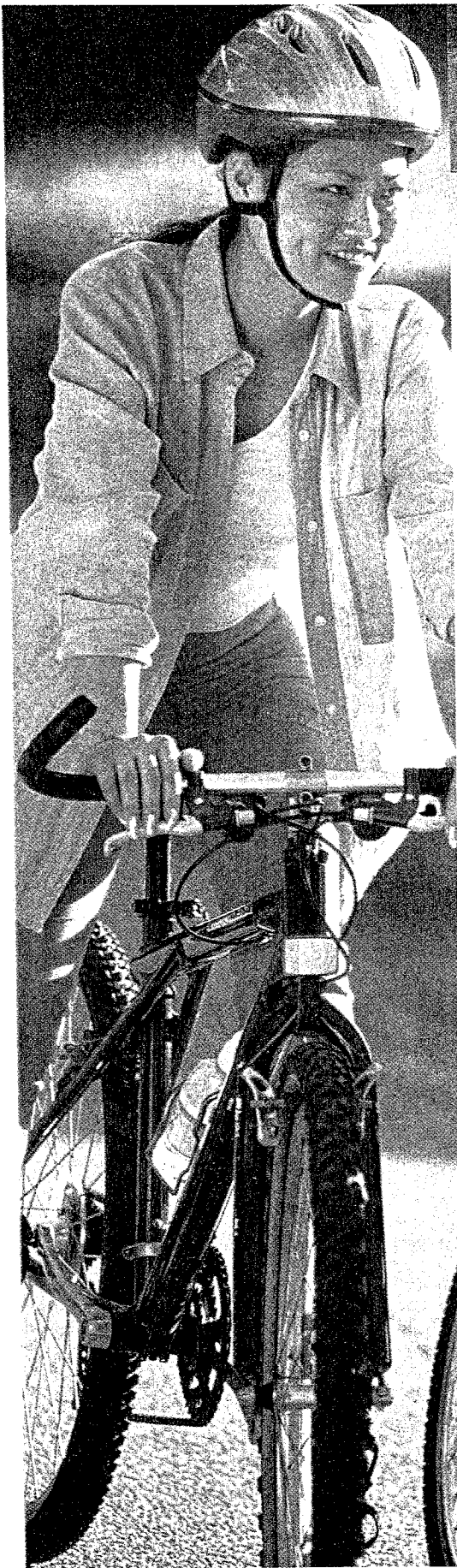
### Tips to limit fats:

- Eat more fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Eat less meat. (Try fish and skinless chicken breast cooked in low-fat ways instead.)
- When you eat meat or poultry, choose lean cuts, and trim the fat. Remove the skin from poultry.
- Switch to fat-free or low-fat milk products.
- Choose fat-free or low-fat versions of your favorite foods.
- Broil, steam, bake, grill or stir-fry foods instead of frying them.
- Limit commercially prepared fried foods, baked goods, snacks and other processed foods.
- Limit salad dressings, cream, butter and margarine.
- Choose fats with the least amount of saturated and trans fats—like liquid vegetable oils (such as olive, canola, soybean, corn, safflower and sunflower oils) or cooking sprays. And use as little as possible.

### To help prevent cravings and overeating:

- Be sure to eat breakfast and other meals regularly.
- Indulge once in a while in your favorite foods that are high in calories or fat—but just eat a small amount.

**Check the Nutrition Facts label on foods and drinks to see what's in them—and how big a serving size is! (See page 16.)**



## Physical activity

is also part of weight management.

### Regular physical activity helps you succeed.

It makes it easier to control your weight—and keep off any weight you've lost. Exercise burns calories. It can also help you stay motivated to take care of your weight and general health.

### Regular physical activity has many other benefits.

For example, it can:

- lower your risk of heart disease, stroke (brain attack), high blood pressure and diabetes (or help you stay healthier if you already have any of these)
- strengthen your muscles and bones
- help keep your body flexible
- reduce stress and lift your spirts.

### Different kinds of activity help in different ways.

All physical activities help in weight management. But it may be best for you to do certain kinds—or a certain combination—of activities, depending on your other health needs. For example:

- Aerobic activities help strengthen your heart. They also use more calories than other activities. Examples are brisk walking, jogging, rowing, swimming and bicycling.
- Strength-training exercises (such as lifting weights) help you build stronger muscles and bones.
- Stretches help your body stay flexible.

### How intense is your physical activity?

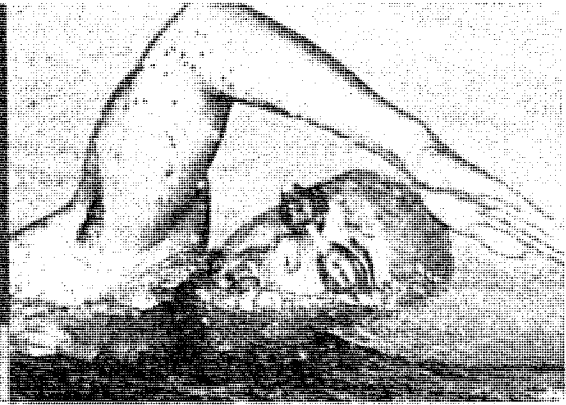
- **Light activity** is any activity that gets you moving—but still allows you to sing while doing it. Light stretching, gardening and dusting are some examples.
- **Moderate activity** is any activity that increases your heart and breathing rates—but still allows you to carry on a conversation without difficulty. Brisk walking, swimming and mowing the lawn are some examples.
- **Vigorous activity** is any activity that gets your breathing and heartbeat going hard and fast. Jogging and bicycling uphill are two examples.

**Be sure to check with your health-care provider before starting or changing an exercise program.**



# Some tips for success

with physical activity.



## Exercise at the right level.

People generally need to stay within their daily calorie needs and get at least 150 minutes of **moderate**—or 75 minutes of **vigorous**—physical activity each week. You may need more activity to lose weight or keep off weight you've lost (up to 300 minutes or more of moderate—or 150 minutes or more of vigorous—activity each week).

You may need to build up to this slowly. Ask your health-care provider what's right for you. And keep in mind that you can spread your activity throughout the week, getting at least 10 minutes at a time.

## Look for everyday chances to be active.

For example, you can:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Walk or bike, instead of driving, to do errands close by.
- Park a little distance away from where you're going. Walk the rest of the way. And pick up the pace when you're walking places.
- March in place while watching TV.

## Consider any special needs.

Get advice from your health-care team. For example:

- If you have a disability, ask what mobility aids or other equipment can help you do the activities you're interested in.
- If you have any chronic health condition or injury (such as a knee injury), ask what special precautions you should take.

## Exercise with others.

It can be more fun, and it's a good way to keep each other motivated. For example:

- Start a family tradition of walking before dinner.
- Ask a friend to be your exercise partner.
- Start an exercise group at work or in your neighborhood.
- Join an exercise class.

## Make exercise enjoyable.

- Choose activities you like. Be sure to ask your health-care provider if they're appropriate for you. Vary them so you don't get bored.
- Don't overexert yourself. Exhaustion or pain can be discouraging and lead to injury.

## Limit sedentary activities

—such as watching TV or using the computer for long periods of time.

## Think safety when exercising.

- Always start by warming up and end by cooling down. (Ask your health-care provider for good warm-up and cool-down activities.)
- Wear appropriate shoes and any needed safety gear.
- Exercise in safe places.
- Stop exercising right away if you feel pain, can't catch your breath, feel dizzy or nauseated, or break out in a cold sweat. Report your symptoms to your health-care provider.
- Drink plenty of water.