

# Diabetes: lose a little weight... ...gain a lot of control

Has your medical provider ever suggested that you lose some weight? There is very good evidence to show that losing a few pounds can decrease your blood sugar, and decrease your risk for heart disease, high blood pressure and certain cancers.

## Why is weight loss so important for people with diabetes?

Too much body fat decreases the body's ability to use insulin. This is called insulin resistance. Weight loss helps insulin resistance- it allows you to use the insulin you make better and improves blood sugar control.

## Why is losing weight so hard?

Usually people follow a very restricted diet for a short period of time, get sick of it, resume their old habits and re-gain the weight. And the vicious cycle continues. To break the cycle and keep weight off the type of diet matters less than sticking with any plan that helps you eat less. Weight loss will usually plateau at six months as the body adapts to fewer calories. Physical activity and continued attention to eating fewer calories is needed to prevent regaining weight.

Many things affect how, what, when and where we eat. There are food messages galore telling us to eat...at the gas station, at the ball game, while watching TV. Portion sizes have increased and many foods are super-sized. Day in and day out a few hundred extra calories adds up to many extra pounds in a year.

## Energy Balance

A person's weight is the result of a few things working together- height, family history, metabolism (the way you burn calories), behavior and living environment. But the bottom line is, weight is related to energy balance. Energy is another word for calories. When you eat or drink, you put energy in. At the same time, your body is constantly working to use energy or put energy out. It takes a certain amount of energy to breath, to grow hair, to digest food, to sleep. It takes more energy to walk, run, bend and grow. Energy balance means:

Same IN and OUT over time = weight stays the same

More IN than OUT over time = weight gain

More OUT than IN over time = weight loss

## Getting Started to Lose Weight

Notice what you do right now. Write it down- what do you eat, where do you eat it, why do you eat it? Do you eat breakfast? How many meals do you eat? How often do you eat out? Do you like to cook? Do you plan meals? Do you make a grocery list? What do you drink?

Recognize that you have more control than you might think. You're in charge of what goes into your mouth. You can eat more vegetables. You can eat out less. You can plan meals and snacks that are healthy. You decide.

Change one thing at a time. Changing food behaviors may help you lose weight. Small changes can make a big difference. Look over the list below and select something that you can start today. Keep it up and add a new idea each week. Choose from the list below, or come up with another idea to note at the bottom of the page.

- Use a smaller plate- your portions will be smaller, but they won't look it
- Eat slowly- take small bites and chew thoroughly before swallowing
- If eating out, share a meal or take half home for tomorrow
- Eat at least 3 times per day
- Choose food portions no larger than your fist
- When grocery shopping, choose a check out line without candy display
- Eat smaller amounts of sweet pastries, donuts and cookies
- Eat 4 ounces of steak instead of 8 ounces and save 300 calories
- Eat a low fat, high fiber breakfast (cereals make this easy)
- Eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low fat dairy products
- Cut out high fructose corn syrup (found in drinks and sweets)
- Cut back on high fat foods such as ice cream, fatty meats, chips
- Ask for salad dressing on the side
- Stop eating when you are full
- Check this web site: [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan)
- Drink 6-8 glasses of water every day
- Replace fries with a green salad
- Eat food and meals at the table, not in front of the TV
- Eat before you get too hungry
- Carry a healthy snack in the car- an apple, string cheese, a few nuts
- Count calories- most women can lose weight on 1500 calories a day; most men on 1800-2000 per day.
- Eat less- reduce your portion by ¼ .
- Top your baked potato with salsa instead of butter and save 135 calories
- Weigh yourself once a week
- Be physically active 30 minutes a day, everyday; at one time or in 3 ten minute blocks
- Set some specific, realistic eating and exercise goals for yourself.

I will \_\_\_\_\_  
I will \_\_\_\_\_

*December 2007*