

# Weight Loss

Note to the Health Care Professional: Topics in this handout are discussed in Chapter 21 of the *American Dietetic Association Guide to Diabetes Medical Nutrition Therapy and Education* (1).

## **When counseling clients on weight loss, consider the following strategies:**

- Identifying whether your clients are ready and willing to make lifestyle changes to lose weight
- Focusing on changing behaviors that are linked to weight loss and weight maintenance
- Talking with your clients about setting realistic goals for weight loss
- Helping your clients understand that not gaining more weight can be considered a “weight loss” success
- Identifying medications that your client uses that may contribute to weight gain or weight loss

## **Reference**

1. Boucher JL, VanWormer JJ, Gates GA. Overweight and obesity. In: Ross TA, Boucher JL, O’Connell BS, eds. *American Dietetic Association Guide to Diabetes Medical Nutrition Therapy and Education*. Chicago, IL: American Dietetic Association; 2005: 241-252.

# Weight Loss



## Big Rewards

Weight loss is not always easy. However, if you have diabetes and are overweight, losing weight can improve your health.

Losing just 10 pounds can help you:

- Control your blood glucose
- Lower your blood pressure
- Improve your cholesterol levels
- Feel less stressed
- Have more energy all day long

## Getting Started

Before you try to lose weight, talk with your registered dietitian (RD). Your RD can help you plan meals and activities that are best for you. If you take insulin, you may need to change the doses because you are eating less or being more active. Talk with your health care team.

## How to Lose Weight

There are many ways to lose weight. For people with diabetes, the safest way is to eat a little less and be more active each day. Here are some tips to try.

## Setting Small Goals

As you try to lose weight, start with small goals that focus on your behavior. For example, you could set a goal to walk for 20 minutes a day, three times per week. Or you could aim to choose raw veggies as an evening snack four nights per week.

Make sure you set goals that you can achieve. When you set and meet small goals for weight loss, you will have a healthy weight program that works for a lifetime.

## Cutting Calories

Here are some ways to eat fewer calories. Think about what may work for you.

- Cut the size of your meals and snacks by one third.
- For lunch and dinner, fill half of your plate with nonstarchy vegetables (such as broccoli, carrots, or spinach). Use a quarter of the plate for a lean meat or other food with protein (such as dried beans, tofu, or eggs). Save the last quarter for a whole grain (brown rice, whole wheat pasta, whole grain bread).
- If you are tempted by high-calorie foods, such as potato chips, cookies, and ice cream, keep them out of your house.
- Stock your kitchen with plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- Choose a meal replacement (drink, prepackaged meal, or frozen dinner) for one or two meals per day. Ask your RD to help you pick healthy ones.
- Cut back on fast food. Have it no more than once or twice a week.
- Make a plan to help you eat well when you are eating out or traveling. (See Eating Out Tips.)



### Eating Out Tips

- Start with a salad and low-calorie dressing.
- Order fish or meat that is baked or broiled without added butter or oil.
- Ask for extra steamed, raw, or broiled vegetables.
- Choose dishes made without creamy sauces or gravy.
- Share your meal with a friend, or take half of it home for another meal.
- Have a plain baked potato instead of fries.
- Enjoy a fruit cup or dish of sorbet for dessert.
- Skip the alcohol. Beer, wine, and cocktails add extra calories!

## Being Active

To reach a healthy weight, you should aim to be physically active for 30 to 60 minutes a day, at least five days of every week. Before you start, talk with your doctor about exercise safety.

Once again, you will be more likely to succeed if you start by setting small goals each week that you can meet:

- You could begin with a goal to be active for 10 minutes a day, 3 times a week. Then increase your activity a few minutes a week until you can do 30 to 60 minutes most days.
- Walking is a great way for most people to be active. Try walking in the morning, during your lunch break, or after dinner.
- Another goal might be spending less time in front of the TV and computer. Use that time to do something active.
- On days when you feel too tired for physical activity, try to be active for just 10 minutes. Some activity is better than no activity. Every minute counts.

## More Hints for Weight Loss Success

### Keep a Journal of Your Progress

Use a notebook to track your weight loss goals and efforts.

Write down:

- How much you eat and drink each day
- How active you are each day
- How much you weigh each week
- Changes in your waist or hip measurements

You can also use your notebook to write down messages that motivate you. Read the messages often to remind yourself that you can succeed at losing weight!



## Learn from Other People Who Have Lost Weight and Kept It Off

The National Weight Control Registry (NWCR) is a group of people who have lost an average of more than 60 pounds and kept it off for more than five years. Here are some of the keys to their success:

- **Eating breakfast every day:** High-fiber cereal is a popular choice.
- **Following a lower calorie, lower fat meal plan:** People in NWCR who have lost weight and kept it off get half of their calories from healthy carbohydrates, such as fruits, vegetables, grains, and low-fat milk.
- **Being active for at least 60 minutes each day:** Most walk for exercise.
- **Keeping track of their weight, food choices, and activity.**



## Other Weight Loss Options

Some people may need drugs or surgery to help them lose weight. Talk with your health care team about whether these options are right for you.