



How Can I Manage My Weight?

Reaching and maintaining a healthy weight can be a challenge. You may have tried to lose weight before without much long-term success. Be assured, you are not alone.

There is no magic weight-loss formula that works for everyone. The key is to find a plan that works for you and provides the right balance of calories and nutrition with the appropriate amounts of physical activity.



What are the keys to healthy weight loss?

To lose weight, you must take in fewer calories than you use through normal metabolism and physical activity. It's a matter of:

- Watching what you eat.
- Choosing nutritious foods.
- Following an overall healthy diet pattern.
- Getting and staying physically active.

How can I make better food choices?

Follow these guidelines to improve your overall diet pattern.

- Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Eat poultry, fish, and nuts and limit red meat.
- Limit how much saturated and *trans* fats, added sugars, and sodium are in the food you eat.
- Select fat-free and low-fat (1%) dairy products.
- Limit beverages and foods high in calories and low in nutrition.

- Choose and prepare foods with little or no salt.

What happens when I reach a healthy weight?

- After you reach a healthy weight, continue to balance the amounts of calories that you take in with the amount of energy you use each day to maintain your weight.
- After a week, if you're still losing weight, add a few hundred more calories.
- If you change the amount of physical activity you do, adjust what you eat.
- Keep a record of what you eat and how much physical activity you get so you'll know how to make adjustments.

How can I stay at a healthy weight?

- Remember that eating smart means eating some foods in smaller amounts and eating high-calorie foods less often.

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- Always keep low-calorie, heart-healthy foods around. Chopped fruits and vegetables make an great quick snack.
- Use a shopping list, and don't shop when you're hungry.
- Plan all your meals. When you're going to a party or out to eat, decide ahead of time what you can do to make it easier to eat right.
- When you're hungry between meals, drink a glass of water or eat a small piece of fruit.
- When you really crave a high-calorie food, eat a small amount of it. Commit to stay active! Don't give up on your physical activity plan.

What if I go back to old habits?

Old habits are hard to break. You might have a bad day and overeat or skip exercise. If that happens, remember that this is not a failure. Instead, recommit yourself to starting again and getting back on track. You can do it!



HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

- 1 Call **1-800-AHA-USA1** (1-800-242-8721), or visit **heart.org** to learn more about heart disease and stroke.
- 2 Sign up to get *Heart Insight*, a free magazine for heart patients and their families, at **heartinsight.org**.
- 3 Connect with others sharing similar journeys with heart disease and stroke by joining our Support Network at **heart.org/supportnetwork**.

Do you have questions for the doctor or nurse?

Take a few minutes to write your questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider.

For example:

What if I start gaining weight?

How can my family help me?

My Questions:

We have many other fact sheets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage disease or care for a loved one. Visit **heart.org/answersbyheart** to learn more.



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