IT’S A LIFESTYLE, NOT A CRASH COURSE.

To manage your weight, make HEALTHIER HABITS and BETTER CHOICES a way of life for you and your family.

Set realistic goals, keep at it — and ENJOY YOUR LIFE.
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INTRODUCTION
You know that losing weight will improve your health. And you know that exercising and eating right are important. So what’s new?

Although many of the basic principles of healthy weight management haven’t changed, we know a lot more today than we did years ago.

For one thing, we understand better the complex challenges we face in managing our weight. We’ve also discovered how people can get around these obstacles. And most importantly, we’ve learned that when it comes to health, there’s no such thing as “one size fits all.”

Weight control is about creating a healthy lifestyle that works for YOU, one step at a time, day by day. This booklet will help you do it.
Wherever you are is a great place to start

Have you tried to lose weight before, or is this your first time? Have you been overweight a long time, or did you put on weight recently? Are you trying to lose a lot, or just a few pounds? Or, are you just trying to keep from gaining in the future?

Wherever you are, the principles are the same. As you get started, keep these things in mind:

- **Weight management is an ongoing process, not an event.** It’s not a diet with a start date and end date. You’re changing your lifestyle for good.

- **You’ll do best if you focus on one change at a time.** This booklet is full of ideas for lifestyle changes that could help you lose weight. But don’t take them all on at once. Focus on one change at a time.

- **Past attempts to lose weight are learning experiences.** It’s not about success or failure. Each attempt has given you information, increased your awareness, and given you tools to build on. All of these things can help you succeed.

- **You can enjoy a healthy lifestyle.** An active life, healthy eating, and other healthy habits will make you feel better. Take pleasure in your new habits every day.

- **There are people who can support you.** Find friends or coaches who can encourage you. Better yet, get your friends to do this with you. Nobody can lose weight for you, but you may not be able to do it alone.

- **You can do this.** Tell yourself, “I’ve done other hard things, and I can do this, too.” Give yourself the same encouragement you would give a friend who was trying to lose weight.

**WHAT ARE YOU ALREADY DOING WELL?**

This booklet is full of lifestyle changes you can make to support your weight loss. As you read, you’ll see some things that you’re already doing.

Get out a pen and give yourself a big ★ for anything you’re doing well. Focusing on your strengths and successes will give you more confidence as you take on new challenges.
Why do you want to lose weight?

There are many great reasons to manage your weight.

You’ll be healthier. If you’re overweight, even a modest weight loss can yield big rewards. For example, research shows that a weight loss of only 5% to 10% of your body weight can immediately lower your risk for many diseases, including diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. So if you weigh 200 pounds now, you’d need to lose just 10 to 20 pounds. As you maintain a healthy weight, you extend these benefits.

You’ll feel better. As you lose weight, you’ll probably have more energy, higher self-esteem, and a brighter outlook.

You’ll reach personal goals. The most important reasons to lose weight are your own reasons. Think about your personal health concerns, your social and emotional life, or an activity you’d like to do. What are you working toward as you start to lose weight?

Keep your reasons in mind with reminders like photos or notes on your mirror. They’ll help you stay focused on the process of getting there.

What are your own most important reasons?

________________________________________________________________________

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SO MANY MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Dropping pounds is one measure of success — but there are others! As you start to make lifestyle changes that will support weight loss, pay attention to all the good things that are happening to you. Healthy habits — especially increasing your activity — pay off in many ways. Even before the pounds come off, you may notice:

- Better physical and mental health
  - Feeling better or having more energy
  - Sleeping better
  - Managing stress better
  - Lower body fat percentage or waist measurement
  - Improvement in other health conditions, such as blood pressure

- Greater confidence that comes from sticking with your plan
  - Turning an unhealthy habit into a healthy habit
  - Making a plan and sticking with it for a day, a week, a month
  - Starting with a small goal and building up to a larger one

Keep track of all of these successes. Reward yourself for every step in the right direction!

No need to go it alone

Intermountain’s The Weigh to Health® program is a 6-month program that can help you lose weight. See page 31 for more information on how to register.
What’s a Healthy Weight for Me?

Not everyone can be — or should be — skinny. But everyone can be healthier. Reaching and maintaining a healthy weight is one of the best things you can do for your overall health.

How do you figure out a healthy weight for you? Healthcare providers use 2 common methods to assess body weight: body mass index (BMI) and waist circumference. Both methods are simple to use, and evidence shows that they are good predictors of health risks associated with overweight and obesity. Body fat percentage, measured by skinfold calipers or underwater weighing, may also be useful if done by a trained professional.

![Figure your body mass index (BMI)](image)

Body mass index uses your height and weight to assess weight and risk for related diseases. Studies have shown that this ratio is a better predictor of body fat than any other measure that uses height and weight only. It’s not perfect, however, and shouldn’t be the only measure considered. For example, people with high muscle density (such as athletes) may be perfectly healthy at a higher BMI.

To use the BMI table, find your height in the left-hand column, and then move across to your weight. The number at the top of the column is your BMI.

### Body Mass Index (BMI) Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Normal</th>
<th>Overweight</th>
<th>Obese</th>
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<td>4'10&quot;</td>
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### What’s a Healthy Weight for me?

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### Example

For a person who is 5 feet 6 inches (5'6") tall and weighs 173 pounds, the BMI is 28.
Measure your waist circumference

If you carry your extra weight around your waistline — if you have an “apple-shaped” body — you have a higher risk of disease than people who carry their extra weight on their hips and thighs. This is partly because belly fat is not just fat under your skin. Some of it is visceral fat (fat around and within your body organs). Visceral fat is more closely tied to health risks like diabetes and heart disease.

To determine your waist circumference, use a tape measure to measure around your natural waistline (right above your hipbones).

What is your risk?

If you’re overweight, you have more risk of having health problems such as diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. If you carry your extra weight around your waistline, your risk is even higher. Use the chart below to check your risk.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Risk Chart</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>If your BMI is...</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.5 or less (underweight)</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.5 to 24.9 (normal)</td>
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<tr>
<td>25.0 to 29.9 (overweight)</td>
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<tr>
<td>30.0 to 34.9 (obese)</td>
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<tr>
<td>35.0 to 39.9 (highly obese)</td>
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<tr>
<td>40 or greater (extremely obese)</td>
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</table>

Your RISK for diabetes, heart disease, and stroke is...

WHERE AM I TODAY?

Date: 
Height: _____ Weight: _____

My BMI: _____
My BMI category: 
- normal
- overweight
- obese

My waist circumference: _________

My risk category (from the risk chart in number 3):
- normal
- increased
- high
- very high
- extremely high

Healthy weight goals for me:

Use a calculator to set your goal.

To reduce my body weight by 5% (current weight × .05):
Lose _______ pounds
By (date): _________

To reduce my body weight by 10% (current weight × .1):
Lose _______ pounds
By (date): _________

Set healthy weight goals for you

Weight loss doesn’t happen overnight. But with persistence and a good plan, it does happen. Based on research, a good goal is to lose of 10% of your body weight over a 6-month period. Set a first goal to lose 5% of your body over a 3-month period and celebrate early success! Use the sidebar to record where you are today and help you set some goals.
Proven Principles for Weight Management

Research shows that people who succeed in weight management follow a few common practices. As you make a plan to reach (and keep) your target weight, make sure it’s based on the principles described on these pages.

Activity

Be active EVERY DAY.

Physical activity is the foundation of good health and weight control. In fact, just about everyone who is able to lose weight and keep it off is getting regular physical activity. More on pages 10 to 13.

Nutrition

Make healthy food choices, and watch your portion sizes.

Starving yourself or following a food fad won’t help you manage your weight — eating in a healthy, balanced way will! And you’ll likely have better energy and better overall health. You’ll find that healthier eating is easier than you think — and gets easier over time. More on pages 16 to 22.

Other lifestyle factors

Balance your mental energy

Sleep, stress, social support, and mental health all play a role in your ability to maintain your weight. Managing these things well will help you focus on building new habits. More on pages 24 and 25.
Make a plan that works for you
Set goals and build new habits.

Most people who lose weight and maintain their weight loss set goals. Set goals for things you want to do, like climb a mountain, or lose a pound a week. You can also set goals to keep up healthy habits, like exercising 30 minutes every day this week. The trick is to choose goals you feel ready to take on, and to reward yourself for keeping them. More on pages 26 to 28.

Tracking and reporting
Record your weight, daily activity, food intake, and goals.

Recording your weight, daily physical activity — and especially what you eat and drink — is important in long-term weight management. Why? It keeps you focused on your goals, honest about your efforts, and motivated! Reporting your progress to a supportive person helps you get ongoing support. More on page 29.

Awareness
Be aware of your “high-risk situations.”

Keep a diary for a few days or so to discover your “high-risk situations” — situations that seem to invite overeating, skipping exercise, or other unhealthy actions. Is it a bag of chips left open on the counter? A buffet? A bad day at work? Or people who push high-calorie foods at you? Awareness can help you make better decisions.

CALORIES STILL COUNT — EVEN IF YOU DON’T COUNT THEM

A calorie is a measure of how much energy is in the foods we eat. Most experts agree that weight management depends on balancing calorie input (from food) with calorie output (from physical activity). In general:

• If you get more calories from food and drink than your body uses for energy, you can expect to gain weight.
• If you get fewer calories from food than your body uses for energy, you can expect to lose weight.
• You maintain your weight by keeping a balance of calories in and out. The chart on page 20 shows about how many calories you need to maintain your weight.
Physical Activity — it’s fundamental

Research shows that no matter what your weight, you can’t be healthy without being active. Regular physical activity is also a proven factor in losing weight and maintaining weight loss.

Why is physical activity so important?

Physical activity is the foundation of health for your body, mind, and spirit. It can do more to improve your health than just about anything else. In fact, studies show that it’s better to be active and overweight than inactive and at a normal weight. That’s why no one — not even a naturally thin person — can afford to be a couch potato!

- Physical activity helps burn more of the calories you eat. This means you’ll store fewer of them as fat around your hips, thighs, stomach, and other “storage sites” on your body.
- It protects your health and helps you live longer. It protects your heart and bones, makes you stronger, and gives you more energy. Being inactive is as bad for your health as being overweight, using tobacco, or having high blood pressure or diabetes. Being more active can help prevent or control these problems — and prolong your life.
- It makes you feel better. It can give you a spring in your step and a boost in your mood. When exercise is part of your regular day, you’ll have more energy and confidence. You’ll also have less anxiety and depression, and you’ll be more alert.

You still need to eat less to lose weight. But the best way to lose weight — and the only way to keep it off — is to add in physical activity.
How do I get started?

The following pages give you simple ideas for getting more activity. It’s as easy as **1 – 2 – 3**:

1. **Move more.** Start with this idea: _no physical activity is bad, some is good, and more is better._ Start wherever you are right now and **build up gradually.** If you’ve been inactive for some time, you may not be able to do much activity at first. Just schedule some time for daily activity, and build up gradually using the F.I.T. principle:
   - **Frequency:** move a little more often
   - **Intensity:** push yourself a little harder
   - **Time:** keep at it for a few minutes longer each time

2. **Sit less.** Even if you’re getting the recommended amount of exercise, too much time sitting during the rest of the day is bad for your health. Look for ways to be more active throughout your day. If you sit at a desk all day for your job, try to get up and move around every 20 to 30 minutes. All physical activity adds up to better health.

3. **Do what works for YOU.** Figure out what will make activity enjoyable for you. Is it going with a friend? Listening to music? Changing activities?

**Work toward something fun!**

Give yourself something fun to work toward. It could be a hike up the mountain, a regular basketball game with your kids, or something else that sounds fun to you. Do something every day to build toward your goal, and get your friends and family to do it with you. Being active every day will be easier if you have a goal.

---

**WHAT’S GETTING IN THE WAY?**

**“I don’t have time.”**
No one does. You have to make time. Schedule activity into your daily routine — and make sure that it’s the last thing to drop off your schedule when you get busy, not the first thing.

**“It’s boring.”**
Figure out what it would take to make it fun. Bring a friend along. Listen to music. Switch activities, routes, locations, or times for exercise. Get creative and keep moving.

**“I’m too tired.”**
Once you get into a routine, you’ll find that exercise actually gives you more energy. It helps you sleep better, too!

**“I’m too fat to exercise.”**
No one is too fat (or old, or clumsy) for physical activity. After all, our bodies are made to move — and regular activity helps you lose excess weight so you can move more easily. The key is to find activities that are right for you at your current weight — it doesn’t have to be running or cycling.

**“I can’t stay motivated.”**
Nothing motivates like success. Set small, realistic goals for yourself. For example, start with 10-minute walks every day this week, 15-minute walks the next, and so on until you reach your long-term goal. And be sure to celebrate each milestone!
Move more

Set aside some time every day to get your heart rate up a little. Make it your goal to find activities you like and will want to keep doing.

How much physical activity do I need?

For general health:

- Aim for 150 minutes (2½ hours) of activity per week — or 30 minutes most days of the week. The weekly total is what’s important to your health, so fit it in wherever you can.

To lose weight or work toward other health goals:

- Aim for 250 to 300 minutes per week of moderate-to-vigorous-intensity activity — or 45 to 60 minutes most days. You can break this up into sessions of as little as 10 minutes at a time, especially if you’re just getting started. The people who keep the weight off are the ones who keep up a high dose of exercise for life.

How hard should I exercise?

- Aim for moderate or vigorous intensity. What does that mean? Here are some examples:
  
  **Light intensity:** Like a casual walk. You’re not working hard enough to raise your heart rate much. These activities count toward “moving more throughout the day,” but not toward your activity goal.
  
  **Moderate intensity:** Like a brisk walk. You’re working hard enough to raise your heart rate and break a sweat, but can still carry on a conversation.
  
  **Vigorous intensity:** Like jogging or running. You’re breathing hard and fast and your heart rate is up. You’re probably too winded to carry on a conversation.

Note: If you’ve been inactive for a long time or have health problems, check with your doctor before beginning a new exercise program.
What type of activity is best?

Focus on aerobic activity first. This should be the centerpiece of your physical activity program.

- **Aerobic activity** is moderate- or vigorous-intensity activity that “revs you up” and gets your heart pumping a little faster and stronger. Examples include:
  - Brisk walking, hiking, or jogging
  - Bicycling
  - Swimming or water exercise
  - Using a stationary bike, stair climber, or rowing machine
  - Vigorous housework or yard work

Aerobic activity builds your endurance, strengthens your heart, and increases your lung capacity. It releases brain chemicals called endorphins, which boost your mood.

- **Aim for 150 to 300 minutes per week.** Try to get some in every day — or at least 5 days a week.

Then add other types of activity for even more benefits.

- **Strength training.** Strong muscles burn more calories. Strength training is especially important for older people and for people trying to maintain weight loss. Try:
  - Core exercises like sit ups and crunches
  - Weight training machines
  - Free weights or resistance bands
  - Pushups, lunges, or squats

- **Strength train 2 to 3 days a week,** with a day off between sessions to let your muscles recover.
- **Work different muscle groups each training session.**
- **Don’t hold your breath while lifting weights.**

- **Balance and flexibility exercises.** These decrease your risk of injury, and they help you move more easily. Try:
  - Stretching
  - Dancing
  - Yoga
  - Martial arts

- **Do these 2 to 3 days a week,** with a day off between sessions.
- **Stretch after physical activity,** when your muscles are warm. Try stretching for 10 minutes at the end of an exercise session.

**Take a hike**

Not sure where to go for a hike? For a great list of fun hikes in Utah, visit: intermountainhealthcare.org/live-well/move-well/healthy-hikes

The list includes easy walks you could do today and challenging hikes you could build up to.

**WALKING WORKS!**

Walking is easy to do wherever you are, and whatever shape you’re in. All you need is a little motivation and a good pair of shoes. Though brisk walking is best for an aerobic workout, even strolling along can help.

**Track your progress — try a pedometer.**

One of the best ways to stick to a walking routine is to measure and track your progress. A pedometer is a great tool for that.

**A good goal is 10,000 steps (about 5 miles) a day.** That may seem like a lot, but most people already get 2,000 to 4,000 steps in a regular day. So adding 6,000 steps is doable for most people — about like adding a daily 3-mile walk.
Sit less — and move more all day

Getting physical exercise is important, but so is spending less time sitting. In fact, research shows that too much time sitting can increase your risk of chronic disease — even if you get the recommended amounts of exercise each week.

Follow these guidelines:

- **Limit total sitting time**, including time at work or school. A good goal is less than 6 hours per day, but start where you are and work down from there. If you have to sit a lot, try to stand up and move around for a few minutes every 20 or 30 minutes.

- **Limit screen time (TV, video games, Internet)**, not including work or school. A good goal is less than 2 hours per day. Watching screens for hours and hours shortens your life.

**How much time do you spend sitting?**

Keep track for a few days to get a sense of how you’re doing.

- **How much time do you spend sitting at work or school?** Mark a ✓ in one square for each hour sitting.

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- **How much time do you spend sitting outside of work or school?** Mark a ✓ in one square for each hour sitting.

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**HABITS TO HELP YOU SIT LESS**

- **Work standing up.** If you work at a desk, choose a few tasks that you can do while standing. See if you can modify your desk to make it a standing desk or a treadmill desk.

- **Walk and talk.** Stand up and walk whenever you’re on the phone. See if you can have some of your meetings while walking.

- **Break it up.** If you have to sit for long periods, try to stand and move around for a couple of minutes every 20 to 30 minutes.

- **Turn off the TV.** When you do watch TV, get up and walk around during commercials.
Do what works for YOU

Getting more physical activity into your life — and keeping it up over the long term — takes more than knowing what you’re supposed to do. Focus on why it’s important to you, and how to make it work for you. Here are some ideas:

- **Find the time.** Plan the time that fits into your daily routines. That may mean just 10 minutes here and there.
- **Choose activities you enjoy** and can keep doing for a long time.
- **Make it fun.** Do you prefer competition or quiet time? Bursts of speed or long, steady efforts? Going solo, or being guided through the moves? Pick your own best way.
- **Find a buddy.** Having someone to exercise with can help you stay on a regular schedule, and help make it more fun.
- **Make it family affair.** Don’t just be an example. Get your family moving with you. Run around the yard, dance around the house — just play.
- **Think progress, not perfection.** Don’t worry about “failing” at physical activity. Changing your lifestyle isn’t all-or-nothing. It’s about making healthier decisions day by day, and starting again when you get off track.
- **Take note of how you feel when you’ve been active** — your energy level, your mood, your confidence.

**Rx TO LIVE WELL**

The activity habits below are strongly tied to overall health, well-being, and weight management. Check anything that you feel ready to start with now.

**Physical Activity**

- **Moderate to vigorous aerobic physical activity:**
  - Brisk walking or ______________________
  - Days/week _______ × Minutes/day ________
  - = Total minutes per week: ________ (build up to at least 150)

- **Strength training** 2 or more days per week:
  - What: ________________________________

- **Reduce total sitting time**
  - from ________ hours a day to ________ hours a day

- **Reduce screen time** (TV, video games, Internet)
  - from ________ hours a day to ________ hours a day

- **Other:** ________________________________

**EXERCISE IS "MY TIME"**

“I’ve tried to work out before and resented the time it took from my day. Then one day I decided to walk to work. When I got to work my pedometer was already at 7,000 steps! I was full of energy. I didn’t have to worry about getting to the gym. And best of all, I’d had a whole hour to myself. Now I don’t call it exercise. I call it ‘my time.’”

— Rick D.
**Nutrition — building health from the inside out**

*Like physical activity, healthy eating needs to be a daily habit, not a special event. And, it can be delicious!*

**Why eat healthy?**

- **It protects your health.** A steady diet of junk food — or even just an imbalanced daily diet — can clog your system and zap your energy. But regular, nutritious eating helps prevent and treat many different diet-related health problems, such as:
  - High blood pressure
  - Diabetes
  - Heart disease
  - Bone disease
  - Some cancers

- **It helps you maintain your weight — or lose weight, if you need to.** Fruits, vegetables, and whole grains can make you feel more full with fewer calories.

- **It promotes overall well being.** Health is about body, mind, and spirit. By making wise food choices throughout each day, you’ll find that you:
  - Sleep better
  - Improve your mood
  - Have more energy

- **It can be delicious.** When healthy eating is part of your regular lifestyle, it can be enjoyable — not an exercise in denial. You may be surprised at how great healthy choices can taste. So be creative. Try new foods and flavors.

**WATCHING THE WINNERS**

Studies show that people who are able to lose weight and keep the weight off are likely to do these things:

- Be aware of calorie needs.
- Eat 500 to 1000 calories per day less than they used to. (That's about the calories in a cheeseburger and sweetened soda.)
- Eat breakfast every day.
- Eat smaller portions.
- Keep a food journal.
- Find the eating patterns that work for them. For example, a person with diabetes may do better with a diet that is more moderate in carbohydrates.
What does healthy eating look like?

With so many food fads in the news, knowing what to eat can seem confusing. But healthy eating can be as simple as 1–2–3:

1. **Choose foods wisely.** Choose more foods with nutrients and fiber, and fewer foods with added fat, sugar, and salt. This means making smart choices as you buy and prepare your food.

2. **Enjoy what you eat — just eat less of it.** You can’t manage your weight without giving some thought to the amount you’re eating. For most people, this requires some extra thought — and a bit of extra effort as you begin to change old habits.

3. **Eat mindfully.** Eating mindfully means paying attention to what you eat, when you eat, and why you eat. This attention can also help you enjoy your food more.

**FOOD FICTIONS**

"It’s all about magic foods."

Despite what countless diet books will tell you, there’s no magic food or formula that can solve all your weight control problems. Whether you’re heavy, thin, or somewhere in between, your body likes — and needs — a variety of foods eaten in a balanced way.

"No pain, no gain."

Weight management doesn’t require starvation. In fact, eating too few calories can mess up your metabolism — and make it even harder to control your weight.

"Some foods are bad. Some foods are good."

Over the long haul, a healthy diet requires a healthy attitude about food. If you make every bite a struggle between good and evil, you’ll probably burn out from all the drama (and guilt). Think balance, think variety — and find ways to include occasional treats in your healthy diet.

"Good nutrition is complicated."

Once you learn a few basic principles, you’ll find healthy eating isn’t all that difficult. It emphasizes fresh, whole foods prepared in simple ways — and good habits developed over a lifetime.

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Doing it for the long term

A healthy diet isn’t temporary. The key to long-term weight maintenance — and good health — is to build healthy food habits that you can maintain.
Choose foods wisely

There’s no magic formula for eating well. The trick is to focus on better habits such as eating more fruits and vegetables. Just focus on tipping the balance of the kinds of foods you eat. Build habits with these two simple rules:

• Eat more healthy foods.
• Eat fewer less-healthy foods.

For more help choosing wisely, talk to a registered dietitian (RD). An RD can help you make a detailed food plan using foods you know and love.

Eat MORE healthy foods

Healthy foods have more nutrients and fiber. They make you feel full longer so you’ll be less likely to go looking for unhealthy snacks.

• Save half your plate for fruits and vegetables. Eating 5 to 10 servings (3 to 5 cups) every day is one of the best ways to eat well.
• Eat whole grains. Choose whole-grain breads, pastas, and rice. Add grains that are naturally high in fiber and nutrients such as quinoa, barley, bulgur, and wheat berry.
• Choose healthy fats. Use unsaturated fats and oils.
• Eat lean protein and fish. Choose lean meats and prepare them with little added fat. Try fish 2 or 3 times a week. Eggs, beans, nuts, and seeds are also great choices.
• Snack wisely. Try eating a few nuts or seeds as a snack. Snacking on fruits and vegetables is a good way to add more of these foods into your day.
• Choose low-fat dairy. Switch to 1% or fat-free milk. Choose low-fat yogurt and cheese.
• Drink plenty of water. Have it whenever you’re thirsty.
Eat FEWER less-healthy foods

Foods with a lot of added fat, sugar, and salt are less healthy for you. Because they have a lot of calories and not much nutrition, they’re often called “empty calories.”

- **Limit sweetened drinks.** Soda, sweet tea, punch, and sports and energy drinks have a lot of sugar. You can have these now and then, but not every day. Choose water whenever you can.
- **Avoid trans fat and saturated fats.** These are fats that are solid at room temperature.
- **Cut back on foods with salt.** Fast food, chips, and many processed foods have added salt that you may not notice. Choose fresh, whole foods instead.
- **Avoid added sugar.** Natural sugars in fruits and vegetables are not a problem. The added sugars in candy, desserts, and processed foods are empty calories.
- **Limit alcohol.** Alcohol is full of empty calories.

Plate by plate

Here’s a trick to see if your meal is well balanced. Think of your plate as divided into zones, each for a different type of food.

- **Fruits and vegetables** should take up about ½ your plate...
- …and a starch (potato) or grain (rice) in ¼ of your plate...
- …with meat or other protein-rich food in the other ¼ of your plate.

**FOR MORE HELP CHOOSING WISELY**

Check out the USDA’s [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov) website. You’ll find lots of nutrition information and interactive tools — including a menu planner that you can tailor to your age, sex, and activity level.

**THE SKINNY ON SODA POP: REGULAR OR DIET?**

Most people know that drinking sugary soda pop makes it hard to control your weight. So, what if you switch to diet soda? Will that help you lose weight?

Unfortunately, there’s no evidence that says it will. In fact, recent studies show that people who drink one or more sodas a day — regular OR diet — are at a higher risk for being overweight or obese. They also have a greater chance of developing diabetes and high blood pressure.

So what’s your best bet for a liquid pick-me-up? Water or low-fat milk. Skip the soda in favor of these healthy alternatives.
Enjoy what you eat — just eat less of it

You’ve probably noticed that portion sizes in restaurants, stores, and homes have been getting bigger and bigger. When there’s more food on your plate, let’s face it — you’ll eat more. It’s no wonder our waistlines have grown! To manage your weight, you need to swim against the tide of ever-growing portions.

To help you “right-size” your portions, follow these steps:

First, become aware of your portion sizes.
Next, compare: are your portions standard or super-sized?
Then, repair your habits if you need to.

First, become aware of your portion sizes

On an average day, you may not pay much attention to the amount of food you eat. But when you’re trying to lose or maintain weight, paying attention really pays off. It helps you begin to understand your eating habits, and see where you need to make better choices.

- **Keep track.** Use a paper notebook, computer program, or tracker. Record what you eat and how much you eat. Make sure to include all your meals and all your snacks — and be honest. You’ll learn a lot about what you’re really eating.

- **Read food labels.** Food labels help you know how much a standard portion is — and how many portions you’re eating. Look at the first line of the label — and be aware that many packages contain more than one serving.

---

### Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup (239g)
Servings per container about 2

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<tr>
<th>Amount per Serving</th>
<th>Calories 100</th>
<th>Calories from Fat 15</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Daily Value</td>
<td>% Daily Value</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Fat 2.5g</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturated Fat 1g</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trans Fat 0.5g</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol 15mg</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sodium 850mg</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Carbohydrate 15g</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dietary Fiber 1g</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sugars 1g</td>
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<td>Protein 7g</td>
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Learn your personal calorie limit. If you want to lose weight, you need to eat fewer calories than what’s listed here.

**TO COUNT OR NOT TO COUNT?**

**Q:** Do I need to count calories?

**A:** Only if you want to. If you build a healthy diet — and if you pay attention to your portions — you may be able to control your weight without crunching numbers. But you may want to keep track for a few weeks to get a better sense of what you’re eating. Healthy eating has a lot to do with awareness. Getting off “autopilot” and making conscious choices goes a long way.

If you have a smart phone, there are plenty of apps that can help count calories and track nutrients easily.

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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Calories needed to maintain weight based on activity level</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>19 to 30</td>
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<td>31 to 50</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>2,000</td>
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</table>
Next, compare: are your portions standard or super-sized?

Because of the nationwide trend toward portion distortion, most of us have little idea what standard serving sizes look like. Do you? How do your portions stack up against standards?

- **Check yourself with a measuring cup or a scale.** Dish up your usual portion of food. Then pour it into a measuring cup or put it on a kitchen scale. For comparison, measure out one serving in the amount described on the food label. Is there a difference? Have you been eating supersized portions?

- **Learn to estimate by hand.** Use the pictures below to get a quick grip on your portion sizes. Bottom line: if a portion is bigger than your hand, it’s more than you need.

Then, repair your habits if you need to

Often, too-big portions mean too many calories and too much unhealthy fat and sugar. But like anything else you do regularly, overeating is a habit. And you can change a habit. To repair your eating habits, start with a few small changes. These habits can help you get started:

- **Plan ahead how much food you should eat.** Measure the right-size portion onto your plate. Put the rest of the food away.

- **Eat from a smaller plate or bowl.** You get the satisfaction of finishing your plate, even though you’ve eaten less.

- **Allow second helpings only of fruits and vegetables.** Make this a rule for the whole family. Take all other serving dishes off the table while you eat.

What about eating out?

Most restaurants serve extra-large portions. So ask for a half-order, or split an order with someone else.

If you’re eating fast food, keep in mind that “value-size” meals often contain more calories than you eat in an entire day! So make it a rule to never order jumbo sizes. Order a kids’ meal instead.
I WASN’T HUNGRY, I WAS WORRIED

“I used to always eat a great big bowl of ice cream on Sunday night. The craving came on like clockwork. “One day I asked myself if I was really hungry — or if it was actually something else. I realized I was worrying about jumping back into work on Monday. The ice cream was my comfort food. “I decided to try to work through my worries in another way. I started to go on a walk on Sunday evening with my friend. We talked about the week and made a plan for how we’d get through everything. And guess what? The craving for ice cream went away!” — Maya

3 Eat mindfully

When you’re sitting in front of the computer, watching TV, or driving, it’s easy to eat a whole bag of chips without even realizing it. That’s called eating mindlessly. Mindful eating means making your meals a focused activity, not a mindless reflex. When you eat mindfully, you’ll naturally make better choices. Here are some ideas:

Pay attention to why you’re eating

Sometimes we eat for reasons other than physical hunger. We may eat when we’re stressed, tired, lonely, or bored.

• Before you reach for a snack, ask yourself whether you’re really hungry — or if something else is prompting you to reach for food. Could you be tired or thirsty? Are you too hot or too cold? Are you feeling anxious or down? People often eat — and overeat — for reasons besides hunger. If you find yourself doing this, find a fix that won’t put on fat. Take a nap, drink some water, or go for a walk instead.

• Keep a “food and feelings” journal for a few days. You may start to see links between your emotions and your eating choices. When you eat, record:
  – The emotions you’re feeling before you eat
  – How hungry you are before you eat
  – Your food choices
  – How full you are after you eat
  – The emotions you’re feeling after you eat

Pay attention to when you’re eating

Do you eat extra food late at night? When you’re driving? When you walk in the door from work? Keep track of the food you eat outside of your planned meals and snacks. Being aware of your habits is the first step to changing them.
Pay attention to what you’re eating

- **Turn off the TV and computer while you eat.** Make the food be the main event. Studies show that when you’re watching TV, your metabolism slows down. You’re also less aware of what you’re eating — and more likely to overeat.

- **Sit at the table.** Set your fork down between bites. Don’t eat while you’re walking around.

- **Eat slowly, and stop before you feel full.** Your stomach is only the size of your fist. It doesn’t take much food to fill it up. But unfortunately, it takes a while for the “I’m full” signal to reach your brain. By the time it does, you’ve already eaten too much. So stop eating when you no longer feel hungry, NOT when you feel full.

- **Enjoy every bite.** Pay attention to the colors, textures, and smells.

---

**Rx TO LIVE WELL**

The eating habits below are strongly tied to overall health, well-being, and weight management. Check anything that you feel ready to start with now.

**Nutrition**

- Eat a healthy breakfast _____ times per week
- Eat or drink MORE of these:
  - fruits: _____servings/day
  - vegetables: _____servings/day
  - other: ____________________________
- Eat or drink LESS of these:
  - sweetened drinks: less than _____ 12-ounce servings/week
  - other: ____________________________
- Eat meals together as a family _____ times per week
- Keep a food journal for _____ days
- Reduce portion sizes by using a smaller plate or: __________
- Other: ____________________________

---

**SOUND FAMILIAR?**

You’re not sitting down with a whole bag of chips, planning to finish them off. But you ARE taking the chips out in handfuls every time you walk by the kitchen counter. Before you know it, you’ve eaten the whole bag.

**Keeping a food diary will help you see what your high-risk situations are.**
WHERE TO START?

“I know that stress contributes to weight gain. But my weight is a big part of what’s stressing me out! It’s causing all kinds of health problems.

“I can’t just decide not to be stressed. Besides being overweight, I’m working 2 jobs and I’m always tired.

After talking with my doctor I decided to start with the sleep. Once I’m sleeping better I’ll have the energy to work on other changes.”

— Ricky

Other lifestyle factors — your mind and body working together

Your mental health and physical health work together. How you sleep, how you feel, and who’s around you play a big role in your overall health, and in weight management. Don’t forget to take a close look at these important factors.

Sleep well

Not sleeping enough can switch on the hormones that make you feel hungry. The more sleep-deprived you are, the more likely you are to be overweight.

In fact, people who sleep fewer than 5 hours a night are also far more likely to have diabetes, depression, or anxiety. Any of these can make it harder to manage your weight.

**Aim for 7 to 9 hours of sleep a night.** To make sleep come more easily, set up a regular bedtime routine. Make sure your room is dark and quiet and comfortable. Don’t drink caffeine or alcohol close to bedtime. If you have a lot of trouble sleeping, ask your doctor for help.

Stress less

Recent research shows a connection between stress and being overweight. It seems that higher levels of cortisol, the so-called “stress hormone,” increase our tendency to store excess fat — especially around our waist.

Activities that can help manage stress include exercise, meditation, hobbies, and being with supportive friends. These things can make your weight loss efforts more successful.

If you need help managing the stress in your life, ask your doctor for recommendations.
Find social support

Family and friends can impact your lifestyle choices and your weight — for better or for worse.

**Ask your family and friends to support and encourage you.**
Better yet, ask them to do this with you. Look for partners and supporters for each of your goals.

If you don’t feel like you have good social support for losing weight, ask your doctor for ideas. There may be a care manager or dietitian you could check in with.

Take care of your mental health

Feelings of sadness, loneliness, or depression can make it hard to manage your weight. In addition, medications used to treat mental health conditions sometimes cause weight gain.

Remember this: Exercise is one of the most important treatments for both mental health and weight management.

If you’re having trouble keeping your spirits up, try to increase your exercise. Try sharing your feelings with a trusted friend. If you’re still struggling, talk with your doctor.

Getting help with your mental health may also help your physical health.

---

**Rx TO LIVE WELL**

The recommendations below are strongly tied to overall health, well-being, and weight management. Check anything you feel ready to start with now.

**Other Important Lifestyle Factors**

- Sleep _____ hours per night _____ nights per week  
  (aim for 7 to 9 hours every night)
- Manage stress by: ________________________________
- Find a friend or family member to support my commitment:  
  Who: ____________________________________________
- Reduce alcohol intake to less than _____ drinks per week  
- Quit tobacco: Method: _________ Quit date: _________
- Reward myself for small changes and successes  
  How: ____________________________________________
- Other: __________________________________________

---

**ENLIST SUPPORT — OR START A TREND**

Healthy living is a friendly activity. Ask the people close to you to support you — or join you — as you start to change your lifestyle.

- Who are your role models for healthy living? These can be people you know personally, or people you just know about.

- Who are the people in your life who can support you? These may be family members, friends, or healthcare providers.

- Who can you be a role model for as you make healthy choices? These may be children or other family members.
Making a plan that works for you

Figure out what you’re ready to do

By now you’ve identified a number of lifestyle changes that could help you manage your weight. You’ll have the most success if you start with just one or two things you feel ready and able to do right now. Use this worksheet to figure out what you’re ready for.

1. Narrow Your Concerns

What are your biggest health concerns?

A ___________________ B ___________________
C ___________________ D ___________________

Which concern are you most ready, willing, and able to work on NOW?

On the ruler, write the letter of each concern above a number to show how ready you feel to work on it right now.

Not ready | Unsure | Ready

Circle the concern you marked farthest to the right. Choose to work on this concern.

2. Narrow Your Behaviors

What specific behaviors or actions would help you with this concern?

Talk with your healthcare providers for ideas about what’s proven to help most.

Which behavior or action are you most ready, willing, and able to do NOW?

Consider the ruler again.

Set your goal around the behavior or action you’re most ready to do.

3. Set Your Goal

My goal: ____________________________

Once you’ve set a goal, turn to page 28 to make a detailed plan to keep it.

For more copies of the Live Well Readiness Worksheet, visit intermountainhealthcare.org/weight.
Turn your goals into success

Once you choose a goal to start with, use these proven principles to help you succeed.

Make a detailed action plan
Be specific. Decide exactly what you’ll do, when, how often, and how you’ll keep track. And be sure to make a plan for how you’ll get back on track when you slip up — because everyone slips up now and then. Use the worksheet on page 28 to make your plan.

Build confidence through baby steps
Be sure your goal is achievable. Nothing succeeds like success. Make short-term goals that you might reach in a week or two. When you succeed with that goal, you’ll have more confidence that you can go a little further.

Track and report your progress
Make your goal measurable so you can keep track of your progress. Then you’ll know when it’s time for a reward.

• Keep a food, activity, and weight journal.
• Report your progress to another person.

REWARD YOUR SUCCESS

Be sure to reward yourself for your progress, no matter how small. Reward yourself for:
• Finding a new habit that you like and can stick with
• Making a plan and sticking to it
• Feeling better
• Losing inches

Make your own list of great ways to reward yourself that doesn’t involve food.

THE DAY-BY-DAY AND THE DESTINATION

As you set your goals, it helps to think of two different kinds of goals.

Outcome goals focus on something you want to achieve. For example, on page 7 you set a goal for a number of pounds you want to lose. You could also set a goal for something fun you want to be able to do, such as play basketball with your granddaughter.

Lifestyle goals focus on the daily habits that will help you reach your outcome goals. For example, you may set a goal to have no more than one soda pop this week, or to exercise 30 minutes a day. These habits can help you lose weight and build strength for the basketball game you’re working toward.

Both types of goals can motivate you. Keeping your outcome goals in mind will help you stick with your new daily habits. Keeping your daily habits in mind will make your outcome goals become a reality.

Rx TO LIVE WELL

These are more habits that are strongly tied to overall health, well-being, and weight management. Your doctor may recommend these habits.

Weight Management

☐ Lose _____ % of body weight or _______ pounds by _______ (date)
☐ Record weight once per week for ________ weeks
☐ Record food intake every day for ________ days
☐ Target calories/day: _____  ☐ Target carb grams/day: _____
☐ Record daily physical activity for ________ weeks
  Target minutes/week: ☐ 20  ☐ 300  ☐ Other: ________
☐ Other: __________________________
Make a detailed action plan

Once you’ve chosen a goal, most important next step is to make a detailed plan for reaching it. Take your time and think carefully about your plan. Use this worksheet to consider all the details.

Write your goal here: ____________________________

What will you do to meet your goal?

- What is the specific action for your goal? ____________________________
- How and when will you do this? ____________________________
- What will your milestones be? ____________________________

How will you track and report your progress?

- How will you keep track? ____________________________
- Who will you report to and how often? ____________________________
- How will you reward yourself? ____________________________
- Who will support you? This might include healthcare providers, family members, friends, or group leaders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person or team</th>
<th>How they can help</th>
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What might get in the way?

- In what situations will this be most difficult for you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>What can you do in these situations? How could you overcome this?</th>
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What will you do when you get off track?

Most people get off track now and then. What will you do to get back on?

| ____________________ |

What else could help?

This might include websites, trackers, more information, a partner to do this with, or community groups.

| ____________________ |

For more copies of this chart, look for the Live Well Action Plan at intermountainhealthcare.org/weight
Keep track of your daily habits

People who succeed at weight loss keep track of their daily habits. Try using this tracker for a few days. For more copies of this tracker, visit intermountainhealthcare.org/weight.

**Tracking Tips**

- **Keep track of what’s important to you.** If you want to lose weight, you may want to track calories. Or, you might track other nutrients such as carbs, fiber, or salt. And don’t forget about sleep.
- **Be honest.** You don’t need to impress anyone. You just need an accurate account of your daily choices.
- **Be complete.** Write down everything that goes in your mouth — especially when you don’t want to. Include portion sizes.
- **Revisit your goals.** Remember where you’re headed, and keep at it. Day by day, you CAN improve your habits — and your health.

### Tracking Tips Table

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For more copies of this tracker, look for the *Live Well Habit Tracker* at intermountainhealthcare.org/weight.
**KEEP UP THE GREAT WORK!**

Once you’ve lost weight, the name of the game is to KEEP DOING WHAT WORKS! Changes to your body chemistry after weight loss can make it hard to keep the weight off. It’s more important than ever to stick with your new habits.

- **Keep watching what you eat.** Once you’ve lost 10% or more of your body weight, your body burns fewer calories. So if you eat the same amount as someone your size who was never overweight, you’ll see the pounds go back on. It doesn’t seem fair — but if you know this now, you can plan to keep choosing healthy foods and small portions.

- **Keep track of your calories daily and weigh yourself weekly.** Hormonal changes in your body may make you think you’re hungry even when you’ve eaten enough. Keeping track will help you stick with your plan and know when to adjust it.

- **Keep up a high dose of activity.** Activity builds lean muscle tissue and helps you burn fat — especially around your waist. People who keep the weight off usually get 60 to 90 minutes of activity most days of the week. If you do an activity you enjoy, this can be a great part of your day.

- **Continue to manage stress and sleep.** Both of these factors will help you manage your weight.

**Keeping the weight off**

As you lose weight, don’t forget to congratulate yourself at every step. Keep your eye on the changes you’ve made to get there, and on how much better you feel. You CAN keep the weight off!

**Moving from weight loss to weight maintenance**

The key to successful long-term weight maintenance is to believe you can reach your goal. If you see your weight management as a new lifestyle, not a diet, you can see yourself succeeding. Once you have the right attitude, you need a plan that keeps you accountable and on track.

**Build a weight-maintenance toolbox**

Make a reminder of why this is important to you. Post a list, a photo, a sign — keep your motivation in view.

- **Identify your support team.** Make a list of people in your life who can encourage you and help you stay on track. Tell them how it’s going and stay in touch with them.

- **Commit to sticking with your new lifestyle habits.** Keep your eye on what’s worked for you so far. Are these habits still part of your daily life? Think about what might get in the way of you keeping these habits in the future, and make a plan to overcome barriers.

- **Keep setting life goals that involve being active.** Plan fun and challenging activities that you’ll have to work toward.

- **Make a plan to stay accountable.** Continue to keep a food and activity journal and weigh in once a week. Report to someone on your support team or healthcare team.

- **Celebrate ongoing commitment.** Don’t forget to reward yourself for sticking with your plan.

- **Make a plan for getting back on track** when you make mistakes. Everybody slips up now and then. Don’t let setbacks become habits.
Resources

For more information and ideas to help you manage your weight, visit Intermountain’s clinical nutrition page at intermountainhealthcare.org/nutrition or weight management page at intermountainhealthcare.org/weight.

INTERMOUNTAIN CONSULTS AND PROGRAMS

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OTHER WEBSITES

- **Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND)** Nutrition information http://www.eatright.org
- **American Heart Association** Fitness center [www.startwalkingnow.org](http://www.startwalkingnow.org)
- **Centers for Disease Control (CDC)** Nutrition and physical activity [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa)
- **National Institutes of Health** Weight-control information [win.niddk.nih.gov](http://win.niddk.nih.gov)
- **New USDA guidelines** Tips to help you create a personalized meal plan [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

BOOKS

- **Eat, Drink and Be Healthy.** Walter C. Willett, MD (Harvard School of Public Health). Simon & Schuster, 2001.
- **A Healthier You.** United States Health and Human Services, 2005.
- **Mindless Eating: Why We Eat More Than We Think.** Brian Wansink, Ph.D. Random House Publishing Group, 2010.
To find this booklet and other weight management resources, go to:

intermountainhealthcare.org/weight