

Patient Education

[intermountainhealth.org](http://intermountainhealth.org)



# The Way to Wellness

Helping you reach and maintain  
a healthy lifestyle



# What's Inside:

---

## **Getting Started ..... 4**

- Wherever you are is a great place to start..... 4
- Why change?..... 5

## **Finding a Healthy Balance ..... 6**

- What if I want to lose weight? ..... 7
- Planning and tracking your progress..... 8
- What are calories and why are they important?..... 9

## **Physical Activity ..... 10**

- Why is physical activity so important?..... 10
- What's getting in the way?.....10
- Move more..... 12
- Sit less ..... 14
- Do what works for YOU..... 15

## **Nutrition..... 16**

- Why eat healthy?..... 16
- What does healthy eating look like?..... 16
- Choosing foods wisely..... 18
- Choose portion sizes appropriate for you..... 20
- Eat mindfully..... 24

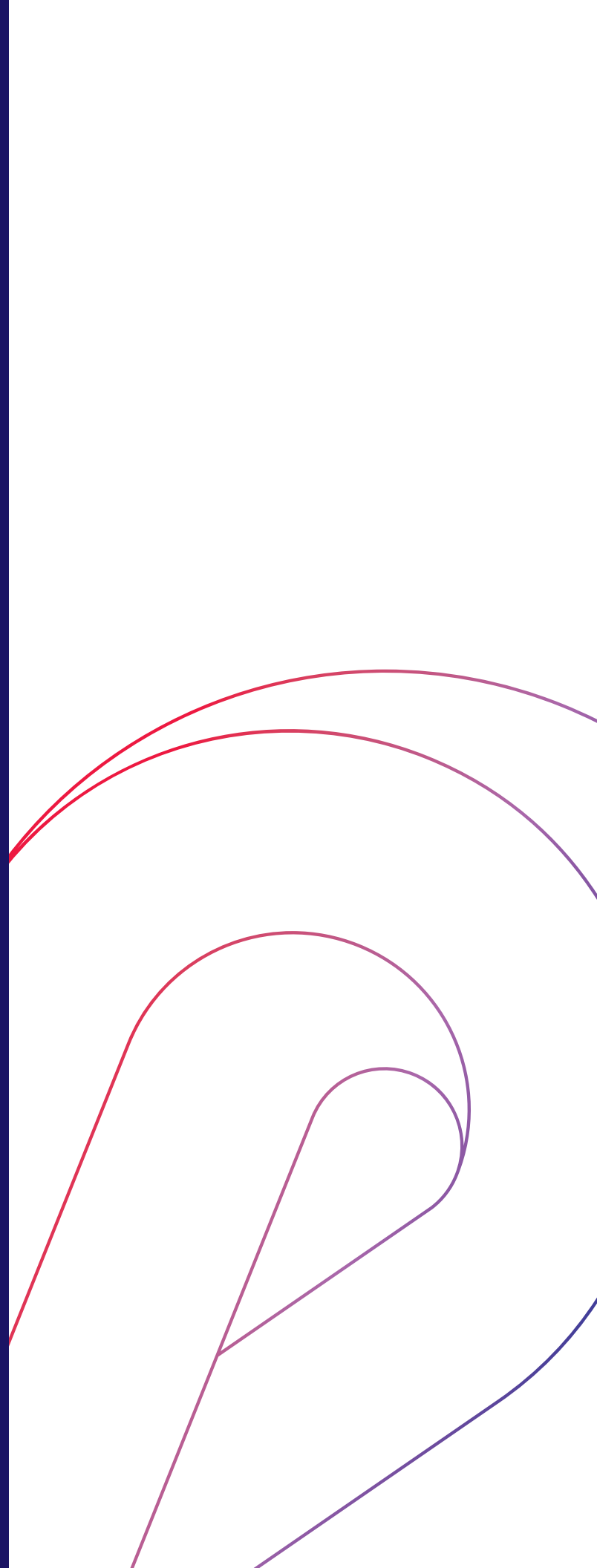
## **Other Lifestyle Factors .....26**

- Sleep well..... 26
- Stress less..... 26
- Find social support..... 27
- Take care of your mental health..... 27

## **Maintaining healthy habits .....28**

- Turning goals into success..... 29
- Figure out what you are ready to do..... 30
- Make a detailed action plan..... 31
- Keep track of your daily habits ..... 32

## **Resources .....33**





This booklet focuses on proven ways to help you build and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Research shows that people who succeed in living a healthy lifestyle and weight management follow some common practices. We will start by looking at where you are at in your healthy lifestyle journey and build on that, taking one step at a time.

If it all seems overwhelming, don't worry! You are not doing this alone. Your healthcare team will be cheering you and supporting you along the way. If you feel stuck or need a helping hand, please reach out. We are here to help you succeed.

Sincerely,

The Intermountain Health Lifestyle and Wellness Team



# Getting Started

---

## Wherever you are is a great place to start!

Anyone can start making healthy lifestyle changes. Wherever you are in your journey, the principles are the same. To get started, keep these things in mind:

- You will do best if you focus on small changes or on one change at a time. This booklet is full of ideas. Trying to do all of them at once can lead to feelings of overwhelm or setting yourself up for failure. Focus on small changes or one change at a time.
- 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.
- Past attempts at making healthy lifestyle changes or losing 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.
- A healthy lifestyle is enjoyable. Living an active life, eating, new and healthy foods, and trying 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, family, coaches or health care professionals like Registered Dietitian Nutritionists who can encourage you. Better yet, get your friends or a family member to do this with you. Nobody can make healthy changes for you, but it is harder to do this 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 make healthy lifestyle changes.



## Why change?

There are many good reasons to change your habits.

To start with:

- **You will be healthier.** As you start to make lifestyle changes pay attention to all the good things that are happening to you. Healthy habits can pay off in many ways. You may notice that you are:
  - Sleeping better
  - Managing stress better
  - Lowering your body fat or waist measurement
  - Improving other health conditions, like your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar.
- **You will feel better.** As you make changes, you will notice that you have more energy, higher self-esteem, and a brighter outlook.
- **You will reach personal goals.** The most important reason to make changes 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 on this journey? Take a few minutes and write down some goals. Add to your list or cross things off as you read this booklet and make your plan.

### Reasons why I want to change:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## How will you measure success?

As you start to make lifestyle changes, pay attention to all the good things that are happening to you. Healthy habits — especially increasing your activity — pay off in many ways. You may notice:

### Greater confidence 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!

# Finding a Healthy Balance

---



Research shows that people who succeed in living a healthy lifestyle and managing their weight follow a few common practices. As you make a plan to reach your goal, start with where you are at and then focus on the following:

## **Activity**

Be active EVERY DAY. Physical activity is the foundation of good health and weight control.

## **Nutrition**

Make healthy food choices and watch your portion sizes. You'll find that healthier eating is easier than you think — and gets easier over time.

## **Other lifestyle changes**

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.

## **Set goals and build new habits**

Most people who lose weight and maintain their weight set goals. Set goals for things you want to do and reward yourself for keeping them.

## **Tracking and reporting**

Record your weight, daily activity, food intake and goals. Tracking keeps you focused on your goals, honest about your efforts and motivated!

## Where am I today?

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Waist circumference: \_\_\_\_\_

Blood pressure: \_\_\_\_\_

Blood glucose (sugar): \_\_\_\_\_ or HbA1c: \_\_\_\_\_

Cholesterol: \_\_\_\_\_

Weekly hours of activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Exercise intensity: Light Moderate Vigorous

Servings of fruit each day: \_\_\_\_\_

Servings of vegetables each day: \_\_\_\_\_

Cups or ounces of water each day: \_\_\_\_\_

Hours of sleep each day: \_\_\_\_\_

Hours of screen time each day (not including work): \_\_\_\_\_



## What if I want to lose weight?

Research shows that a modest 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. For example, if you weigh 200 pounds now, a good goal is to lose 10 to 20 pounds. A realistic timeline to lose that amount of weight would be 3 to 6 months.

## What's a healthy weight goal for me?

Use a calculator to help set your goal.

To reduce my body weight by 5% (current weight x 0.05),  
I need to lose \_\_\_\_\_ pounds.

I think I can do it by this date: \_\_\_\_\_

To reduce my body weight by 10% (current weight x 0.1),  
I need to lose \_\_\_\_\_ pounds.

I think I can do it by this date: \_\_\_\_\_

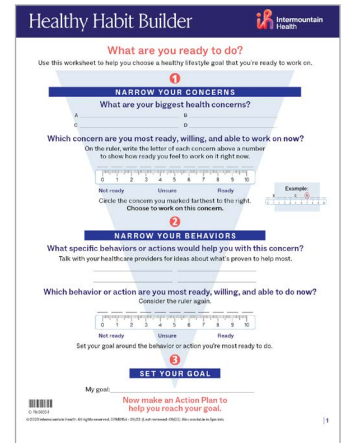
## Be aware of your high-risk situations!

Keep a diary for a few days or weeks. This will help you discover your “high-risk situations.” These are moments or events 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.

# Planning and tracking your progress

## Set new 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.



The image shows a worksheet titled "Healthy Habit Builder" from Intermountain Health. It is designed to help users choose a healthy lifestyle goal they are ready to work on. The worksheet is divided into several sections:

- What are you ready to do?**: A section for users to write their goal.
- NARROW YOUR CONCERNS**: A section where users list their biggest health concerns and rank them based on how ready they are to work on them. It includes a scale from 0 (Not ready) to 5 (Ready).
- NARROW YOUR BEHAVIORS**: A section where users list specific behaviors or actions that would help with their concern, and rank them based on how ready they are to do them. It also includes a scale from 0 to 5.
- SET YOUR GOAL**: A section where users write their goal and make an action plan to help them reach it.

## Tracking and reporting

### Record your weight, daily activity, food intake, and goals.

Recording your weight, daily physical activity, and what you eat and drink is important for 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.





## What are calories and are they important?

A calorie is simply a measure of how much energy is in the food you eat. That energy fuels your daily activities and your body's normal functions. The way your body uses calories — your metabolic rate — can be affected by your age, sex, genetics, hydration, muscle mass, hormones, stress level, and more. Most experts agree that each body reacts to both calories and activity differently and that good health is achieved by balancing energy in with energy out. For example:

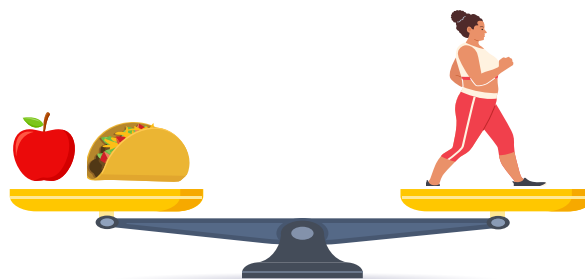
**If you get more calories from food and drink than your body uses for energy, you can expect to gain weight.**



**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 healthy balance of food and activity.**



# Physical Activity: It's fundamental

## The secrets of those who do it well

People who have the most success increasing their physical activity levels do these things:

- Find physical activities they like to do
- Build up slowly but consistently
- Plan activity into every day so it's part of their routine and not an afterthought
- Get around 60 minutes of physical activity each day
- Find ways to keep moving all day long

No matter where you are in your journey, you can start being active **now**. Research shows that physical activity is essential for achieving good health.

## 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.

- **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 may 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.



## 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!

### **“Exercise makes me feel uncomfortable.”**

Physical activity is for everyone! No matter your body shape, age, or experience level, you can find an activity that works for you. Start at a level and pace that fits your body's current abilities. Some ideas may include chair exercises, water aerobics, resistance bands, and more!

### **“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!

## **Work toward something fun!**

Give yourself something fun to work toward. It could be a cruise, a basketball game with your kids, a bicycle tour, 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.



### Ten-at-a-time is fine!

Thirty to 60 minutes of exercise a day seems like a lot of time, but you don't have to do it all at once. The goal is to reach 150 to 300 minutes or more a week, so fit it in wherever you can.

Try breaking up your activity into smaller chunks of time during the day. Just be sure to put forth moderate to vigorous effort for at least 10 minutes at a time.

## 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 (2 ½ hours) of activity per week, or 30 minutes most days of the week.** The weekly total is what is 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 are 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:** a casual walk. You are 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:** a brisk walk. You are working hard enough to raise your heart rate and break a sweat, but can still carry on a conversation.
- **Vigorous intensity:** jogging or running. You are breathing hard and fast and your heart rate is up. You are 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

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
- Push-ups, 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.

## Walking works!

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

Track your progress. One of the best ways to stick to a walking routine is to measure and track your progress with a smartphone, fitness watch, or pedometer. 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. Think of it as adding a 3-mile walk to your daily routine.

## Take a hike

Not sure where to go for a hike? To find places to hike near you, visit: [alltrails.com](https://www.alltrails.com)

The site includes easy walks you can do today and challenging hikes you can build up to.

## Sit less

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 to you spend sitting **at work or school**? Put a ✓ in one square for each hour sitting.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Day 1												
Day 2												
Day 3												

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

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Day 1						
Day 2						
Day 3						

### 4 ways to 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 a 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/day to \_\_\_\_\_ hours/day

- Reduce screen time** (TV, video games, Internet)  
from \_\_\_\_\_ hours/day to \_\_\_\_\_ hours/day

- Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Nutrition: Building Health From the Inside Out



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

## Why eat healthy?

- **It protects your health.** 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 to manage weight.** A balanced plate with multiple food groups can keep you satisfied throughout the day.
- **It promotes overall well being.** Good nutrition can help you:
  - Sleep better
  - Have more energy
  - Improve your mood
- **It is delicious.** You may be surprised at how great healthy choices can taste. So be creative. Try new foods and flavors.

## 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 Choosing healthy foods.
- 2 Eating the right amount.
- 3 Eating the right way.

## Do 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.



## Food fiction

### **“It’s all about magic foods.”**

No matter what the diet books and social media influencers tell you, there’s no magic food or formula that can solve all your health problems.

Whether you’re heavy, thin, or somewhere in between, your body likes — and needs — a wide variety of foods eaten in a balanced way.

### **“No pain, no gain.”**

Finding a healthy balance doesn’t mean starvation. In fact, eating too little can mess up your metabolism and make it even harder for your body to find a healthy balance.

### **“Some foods are bad. Some foods are good.”**

Over the long term, 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 and 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.

Read the following pages for simple ways to make healthier food choices every day.



## Plan ahead to help you choose wisely

Choosing foods wisely is easier if you plan ahead. You'll make healthier choices when you're not hungry. Here are some important things to plan:

- **Breakfast 1-2-3.** Plan a daily breakfast that includes these 3 food types: low-fat protein, whole grains, and a fruit or vegetable. Limit added sugars.
- **Brown bag lunch.** Pack your lunch and bring it to work or school. You'll save money and you'll eat better.
- **Pack-a-snack.** Plan healthy snacks and have them ready when you're hungry. Keep unhealthy snacks out of your house and off your desk.
- **Regular family meals.** Plan to eat at the table together often. You'll be more likely to choose foods wisely, and more likely to feel supported, too.
- **Your grocery list.** Make a list of foods you like that are healthy. When you're at the grocery store, put only those foods in your cart!

## 1. Choosing 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:

- Choose foods that have more nutrients and fiber.
- Choose fewer foods with added fat, sugar, and salt.

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

### Choose more of these foods:

Foods with more nutrients and fiber help 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, such as olive oil, canola oil, avocados, and nuts.
- 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.

## Choose less of these 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. Butter, shortening, and tropical oils are some examples.
- **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.

## Target Diet

Aim for these totals, depending on your goal:

### Daily

- Fruit: 1 to 1 ½ cups
- Vegetable: 2 to 3 cups
- Fiber: 25 to 35 grams (g)
- Fats: Limit saturated fats
- Dairy: 2 to 3 servings, low-fat
- Sodium: less than 2300g
- Sugar: Limit added sugar

### Weekly

- Fish: 2 to 3 servings
- Legumes (beans, nuts, peas, lentils): 3 to 4 servings
- Poultry and eggs: 1 to 2 servings

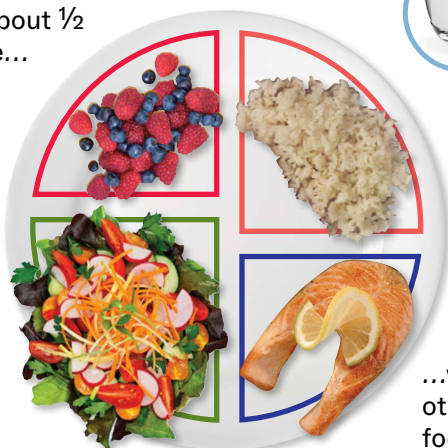
### Monthly

- Lean red meat: 1 to 2 servings

## 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 [myplate.gov](https://www.myplate.gov). There, you will find nutrition information and interactive tools — including a menu planner that you can adjust for 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 1 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? Regular or sparkling water, or low-fat milk. Skip the soda in favor of these healthy alternatives.

## 2. Choose portions sizes that are appropriate for you

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.

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.**

### 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 smart phone app. 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 top of the food label — and be aware that many packages contain more than one serving.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (239g)	
Servings per container about 2	
Amount per Serving	
Calories 100	Calories from Fat 15
_____ % Daily Value *	
<b>Total Fat 2.5g</b>	2%
Saturated Fat 1g 0%	
Trans Fat 0.5g	
<b>Cholesterol 15mg</b>	5%
<b>Sodium 850mg</b>	35%
<b>Total Carbohydrate 15g</b>	5%
Dietary Fiber 1g 4%	
Sugars 1g	
<b>Protein 7g</b>	

## 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?

Most of us have little idea what standard serving sizes look like. Learn what standard portions look like and see how your portions compare.

## 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.

### Q: Do I need to track what I eat?

**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 doing math. Studies show that people who track what they eat and drink are more successful with making and maintaining lifestyle changes. Tracking has a lot to do with awareness. Getting off “autopilot” and making conscious choices goes a long way.

Smart phone apps can help count calories and track nutrients easily.

**1 CUP**  
(Baseball)



**½ CUP**  
(Large part of light bulb)



**¼ CUP** (Golf ball)



**3 OUNCES MEAT**  
(Deck of cards)



**1 OUNCE CHEESE**  
(Thumb)



**1 TABLESPOON**  
(Poker chip)



## Estimating portion sizes

Food	Serving size	Reference object
Vegetables	1 cup	Baseball
Whole fruit	1 medium	Baseball
Berries or grapes	½ cup	Large part of light bulb
Dried fruit	¼ cup (1 ounce)	Golf ball
Baked potato	1 medium	Standard computer mouse
Pancake or waffle	4 inches across	CD/DVD
Flour tortilla	8 inches across	Salad plate
Bagel	2 ounces	Standard can of tuna
Roll	1 small	Bar of soap
Rice, quinoa, or couscous	½ cup	Large part of light bulb
Pasta, cereal, or popcorn	1 cup	Baseball
Nuts	¼ cup	Golf ball
Peanut butter	2 tablespoons	Ping pong ball
Beans	½ cup	Large part of light bulb
Tofu	¼ cup (4 ounces)	Large part of light bulb
Meat	3 ounces	Deck of cards
Milk or yogurt	1 cup (8 ounces)	Baseball
Cheese	1 ounce	Thumb
Sour cream	¼ cup	Golf ball
Salad dressing, mayonnaise, butter, or oil	1 tablespoon	Poker chip
Sandwich	1 medium	2 decks of cards
French fries	1 cup	Baseball
Pizza	1 slice	2 Dollar bills
Ice cream	½ cup	Large part of light bulb
Chocolate	1 ounce	Dental floss
Brownie	2-inch square	Dental floss
Cookie	1 small	2 poker chips
Cake	1 slice	Deck of cards

## Measure by Measure

Try this portion pop-quiz: serve yourself your usual portion of food. Now measure it with a measuring cup. Are you surprised at the size of your portion? Does it work with your personal plan for weight management?

It often takes a while to orient yourself to modest portion sizes. In the meantime, leave a set of measuring cups and spoons out on the kitchen counter where you can easily see and use them.

## 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 realize. So plan ahead! Most fast food restaurants have menus and nutrition information posted on-line. Use these tools to plan what type of meal you want to eat.





### **I wasn't hungry, I was worried.**

"I used to 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 going for walks on Sunday evening with my wife. 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!"

— John

## **3. Eat mindfully**

Mindful eating means making your meals a focused activity, not a mindless reflex. When you're distracted while eating, like sitting in front of a screen or driving, it's easier to eat more than you realize. That's called eating mindlessly. 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 an alternative that helps satisfy those needs without food. 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 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: \_\_\_\_\_

# Lifestyle Changes: Mind and body working together



## 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

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 things.

## 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, 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 making lifestyle changes, your care manager, dietitian, or doctor can help with ideas.

## Take care of your mental health

Feelings of sadness, loneliness, or depression can make it hard to manage your health.

If your mental health is struggling, there are different things you can try:

- Increase your exercise.
- Share your feelings with a trusted friend or therapist.
- Try different medications or treatments.
- 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.

#### Lifestyle changes

- Sleep \_\_\_\_\_ hours per night
- Manage stress by: \_\_\_\_\_
- Find a friend or family member to support my commitment.
  - Who: \_\_\_\_\_
- Reduce alcohol to less than \_\_\_\_ drinks per week
- Quit tobacco: Method: \_\_\_\_\_ Quit date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Reward myself for small changes and successes

## 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.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# Maintaining Healthy Habits

As you make changes, it's normal to have setbacks. This section will teach you some strategies on how to transition from making changes, to maintaining habits.

## Moving from making changes to maintaining healthy habits

### Build a habit 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.

### Avoiding a relapse

As you move through your journey, you will sometimes hit bumps along that road. You may overeat at a celebration or miss a few days of exercise due to illness. It's okay. Life happens! These are called lapses.

- A lapse is a temporary setback. If you overeat one night, you have temporarily lapsed into an old habit.
- A relapse is a return to a previous state. If you overeat one night, then continue to overeat afterwards, you have relapsed into an old eating pattern.

You can expect to have an occasional lapse, but it's important to keep a lapse from turning into a relapse. Recognize the lapse, recommit to your goals, and make a plan to get back on track.

## Turning 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 30 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.

## Setting goals

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, 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 exercise 30 minutes a day. These habits can help you improve your health 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.

Use the worksheets on the next pages to help you narrow your goals and create an actionable plan.



### 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

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

# Find out what you're ready to do

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

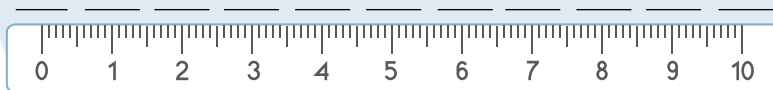
## NARROW YOUR CONCERNS

What are your biggest health concerns?

A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_  
C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_

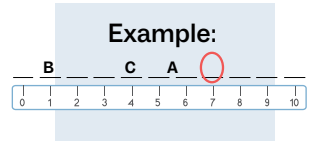
Which concern are you most ready, willing, and able to work on now?

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.



Not ready                      Unsure                      Ready

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

3

## SET YOUR GOAL

My goal: \_\_\_\_\_

# Make a detailed action plan

Write your goal here: \_\_\_\_\_

**Example:** 20 minutes of exercise at least 4 times a week for 3 weeks.

## ➔ 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? \_\_\_\_\_

**Example:**

Walk around my office building for 20 minutes at lunchtime. Each week I walk 4 times it is a milestone.

## ➔ 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.

**Example:**

**Tracking:** Every time I go I'll put a check mark on the calendar at my desk.

**Reward and report:** Each milestone I'll buy new music to listen to while walking. After 3 weeks, I'll email my doctor with the good news and I'll make a new goal with more minutes.

**Support:** My co-worker will remind me to go. Every night I'll tell my wife if I walked.

Person or team

How they can help

---

---

---

---

---

---

## ➔ What might get in the way?

- In what situations will this be most difficult for you?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What can you do in these situations? How could you overcome this?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Example:**

I might not feel like walking when I'm discouraged. When this happens, I'll invite a co-worker to go with me.

I might not be able to walk at lunch if I have a meeting during that time. When this happens, I'll walk after work.

## ➔ 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?

---

**Example:**

If I miss a few days I'll commit to starting again the next Monday.

## ➔ What else could help?

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

---

**Example:**

I want to find out if there's a fitness program at my work.

# 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.

## Tracking Tips

- **Keep track of what's important to you.** You may want to track calories. Or, you might track other nutrients such as carbs, protein, fiber, or salt. And don't forget about sleep. You might be surprised at how your sleep can affect your health habits.
- **Be honest.** You don't need to impress anyone. You just need an accurate account of your daily choices.
- **Be complete.** Write down the details of your activity, sleep, portion sizes, and food choices. Don't leave out foods or activities
- **Revisit your goals.** Remember where you're headed, and keep at it. Day by day, you **can** improve your habits — and your health.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (circle one) **S M T W T F S** **Sleep:** Number of hours I slept last night: \_\_\_\_\_

Meal ★if without distraction	Food item (portion size)	I'm also tracking <input type="checkbox"/> _____	Vegetables	Activity
Breakfast			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Activity: _____ Minutes: _____ (aim high)
Lunch			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Intensity: <input type="checkbox"/> Light
Dinner			<b>Fruits</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Vigorous
Snacks			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Hours sitting (aim low) _____ at work/school _____ outside work/school

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (circle one) **S M T W T F S** **Sleep:** Number of hours I slept last night: \_\_\_\_\_

Meal ★if without distraction	Food item (portion size)	I'm also tracking <input type="checkbox"/> _____	Vegetables	Activity
Breakfast			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Activity: _____ Minutes: _____ (aim high)
Lunch			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Intensity: <input type="checkbox"/> Light
Dinner			<b>Fruits</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Vigorous
Snacks			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Hours sitting (aim low) _____ at work/school _____ outside work/school

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (circle one) **S M T W T F S** **Sleep:** Number of hours I slept last night: \_\_\_\_\_

Meal ★if without distraction	Food item (portion size)	I'm also tracking <input type="checkbox"/> _____	Vegetables	Activity
Breakfast			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Activity: _____ Minutes: _____ (aim high)
Lunch			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Intensity: <input type="checkbox"/> Light
Dinner			<b>Fruits</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Vigorous
Snacks			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Hours sitting (aim low) _____ at work/school _____ outside work/school



# Resources

For more information and ideas to help you manage your weight, check out the information on this page. Virtual or distance options are also available in Utah, Nevada, Idaho, and Colorado.

## Intermountain Consults and Programs

Where	Phone	Nutrition Counseling	The Way to Wellness
Alta View Hospital	801-507-3253	✓	
American Fork Hospital	801-855-3461	✓	✓
Bear River Valley Hospital	435-207-4800	✓	✓
Cassia Regional Hospital	208-677-6270	✓	
Cedar City Hospital	435-868-5335	✓	✓
Delta Community Hospital	435-893-0569	✓	
Fillmore Community Hospital	435-893-0569	✓	
Garfield Hospital	435-676-1258	✓	
Heber Valley Hospital	435-657-4311	✓	
Hurricane Clinic	435-251-3793	✓	
Intermountain Medical Center	801-507-3253	✓	✓
LDS Hospital	801-507-3253	✓	
Layton Hospital	801-389-2467	✓	✓
LiVe Well Center Park City	435-658-7119	✓	
LiVe Well Center Salt Lake City	385-282-2700	✓	
Lifestyle Medicine St. George	435-251-3793	✓	✓
Logan Regional Hospital	435-716-5439	✓	✓
McKay-Dee Hospital	801-387-7854	✓	✓
Riverton Hospital	801-507-3253	✓	✓
Sanpete Valley Hospital	435-462-4631	✓	
Sevier Valley Hospital	435-893-0569	✓	
Spanish Fork Hospital	385-344-5118	✓	✓
Sunset Clinic	435-634-6010	✓	
The TOSH Campus	801-507-3253	✓	
Utah Valley Hospital	801-357-8143	✓	✓

## Virtual class

- Email [waytowellness@imail.org](mailto:waytowellness@imail.org) or call 801-507-2400.
- Check [intermountainhealth.org](http://intermountainhealth.org) for times and locations

## Websites

- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) [eatright.org](http://eatright.org)
- American Heart Association Fitness Center [heart.org](http://heart.org)
- American Diabetes Association Health and Wellness [diabetes.org](http://diabetes.org)
- Centers for Disease Control (CDC) [cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa](http://cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa)
- National Institutes of Health Weight Management and Healthy Living [win.niddk.nih.gov](http://win.niddk.nih.gov)
- National Institutes of Health Aim for a Healthy Weight [nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose\\_wt](http://nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt)
- My Plate (USDA) How to use my plate for healthy eating [myplate.gov](http://myplate.gov)

## Books

- *Intuitive Eating*, by Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch, 4th edition, St. Martin's Essentials, 2020
- *Mindless Eating: Why We Eat More Than We Think*. Brian Wansink, Ph.D. Random House Publishing Group, 2010

## Apps

- My Fitness Pal. Daily food tracker, recipes, coaching
- Nourishly. Connect with your dietitian or coach. Daily tracking, meal planning, messaging





To find this booklet and other patient education, go to:  
[intermountainhealth.org](https://intermountainhealth.org)



Intermountain Health complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. Se proveen servicios de interpretación gratis. Hable con un empleado para solicitarlo. 我們將根據您的需求提供免費的口譯服務。請找尋工作人員協助。

© 2011–2024 Intermountain Health. All rights reserved. The content presented here is for your information only. It is not a substitute for professional medical advice, and it should not be used to diagnose or treat a health problem or disease. Please consult your healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns.  
HH004 - 05/24 (Last reviewed - 05/24) Also available in Spanish.