

Weight Loss

It's no secret that many Americans are carrying a little extra weight with them nowadays. Getting rid of it, however, can be confusing and frustrating. Many common diets today make ridiculous demands that are hard to keep up with and can cause damage to your body. Taking some simple steps toward better health can really help make losing weight easier.

According to the FDA and PepsiCo, one of the biggest problems overweight Americans face is excessive calorie intake and improper distribution of calories throughout the day. Cutting back on your portions and eating lower calorie foods can help you cut down on your calorie intake. Also, eating breakfast, lunch, and dinner spreads out the calories that you eat in a day. Spreading the calories out allows you to burn some off during the day. Here are some small steps you can also take that can help to lose weight.

- Eat fresh fruits and vegetables or those that are flash-frozen at the freshest point instead of canned.
- Switch to a whole-grain bread.
- Eat low-fat or fat-free milk and cheese.
- Switch to diet sodas and 100% juice drinks – these are lower in sugar and therefore, have fewer calories.
- Drink more water. It has 0 calories and helps to keep you hydrated, unlike soda.
- Limit alcoholic beverages – alcohol has calories but no nutrients. Women should not consume more than 1 alcoholic beverage per day and men should not consume more than 2.
- Foods that contain oil and fat have double the calories of foods containing carbohydrates or proteins. Foods with oil or fat should therefore be used in moderation.
- As always, foods with saturated and trans fats should be used as sparingly as possible as they contain the “bad” cholesterol.
- When you desire something sweet like candy, cookies, or cake, eat a small portion.
- Possibly the most important step to losing weight is getting exercise. This is often the most intimidating part of weight loss, but exercise doesn't have to be strenuous to be effective. Walking 30 minutes everyday can be very effective when attempting weight loss.

We've all heard it a thousand times, but for a diet to work, it must be a lifestyle change and not just a fad. You can eat the foods you want if you eat them in moderation and switch to a low-calorie version. Setting realistic goals for yourself can make the change easier and less stressful. Instead of saying you want to lose 25 pounds before summer, say you want to lose 5 pounds this month. Not everyone wants to cook at home every night, so here are some tips for eating out at restaurants that can help you stick with your new healthy lifestyle.

- Select foods that are roasted, steamed, baked, or broiled and avoid fried foods at all cost.

- Share your dinner and/or dessert with your dinner party.
- Split your meal in half and have it packed up in a take-home container immediately; this will keep you from being tempted to eat the whole meal in one sitting.
- Ask for salad dressings, gravies, and butter on the side of your meal. This will help you avoid over-indulging.