

# Healthy Weight – Tips and Tools for a Healthier You

## What is considered a healthy body weight?

Body Mass Index, or BMI, is one tool we can use to assess our body weight.

Here's how to calculate your BMI:

$$\frac{\text{Body Weight (in kilograms)}}{\text{Height (in meters)}^2}$$

To convert your weight in pounds to kilograms, divide your body weight by 2.2.

To convert your height in inches to meters, multiply your height x 0.0254.

To square your height, multiply your height x your height.

### Classifications of BMI:

Underweight	Less than 18.5
Normal Weight	18.6 to 24.9
Overweight	25 to 29.9
Grade 1 Obesity	30 to 34.9
Grade 2 Obesity	35 to 39.9
Grade 3 Obesity	40 or Above

The goal is to achieve a weight that is the healthiest for you.

This doesn't always mean aiming for a BMI in the normal range. For individuals with a BMI in the obesity range, even small amounts of weight loss – like 10 pounds – can result in health benefits. And *prevention* of more weight gain is an important place to start.


To learn more about nutrition programs offered at UCSF Medical Center, contact:


- The Nutrition Counseling Center at 415-353-2291.
- The UCSF Weight Management Program at 415-353-2105.




## What are the keys to a healthy lifestyle?

Being healthy is not just about following a short-term “diet” or “program.” Leading a healthy lifestyle means just that...making positive changes that promote lifelong health and well-being. So what are the keys to a healthy lifestyle?

 **Eat Well** – make smart food choices.

 **Be Active** – get your body moving.

 **Be Aware and Plan** – know your challenges and prepare to make healthy choices.

By understanding these three keys, you can begin to unlock the mystery of maintaining a healthy body weight.

## What are the benefits of maintaining a healthy body weight?

Maintaining a healthy body weight through diet and exercise has huge health benefits:

1. Lowers blood pressure and cholesterol – to help reduce your risk of developing heart disease, like heart attacks and stroke.
2. Helps prevent or delay serious conditions like diabetes, some types of cancer, breathing problems, and joint and bone disorders.
3. Boosts well-being and helps you manage stress.
4. Improves your chances at a longer and healthier life.

Making the commitment to adopt positive changes in your diet and exercise habits is a good return on your investment!

# How Can I Get Started? Remember **the 3 keys** to a healthy weight and lifestyle

## **EAT WELL**

- Don't skip meals... you may be tempted to overeat later. Weight loss efforts are most successful when meals and snacks are small and spread out during the day.
- Eat balanced meals. Choosing a wide variety of foods is important for good health, but control portion sizes and avoid second servings if you are trying to lose weight. Try serving the foods on your plate with these tips in mind:
  - Fill one quarter of your plate with lean protein – this portion size fits within palm of your hand. Lean protein sources include poultry, fish, beef round and loin, tofu, and egg whites.
  - Fill another quarter of your plate with starch. Starch includes foods like bread, rice, pasta, cereal, potatoes and beans. Choose most of your starches from whole grains, such as whole wheat bread or tortillas, brown rice, whole wheat pasta, whole grain and bran cereals, or beans.
  - Then fill at least half of your plate with non-starchy vegetables like salads and other greens, broccoli, carrots, mushrooms and tomatoes.
  - If desired, add a fruit or cup of milk or yogurt to your meal, or enjoy as a snack instead.
- Limit foods that are high in fat, since fat is a concentrated source of calories.
  - Choose lean meats, like those listed above. Also, trim visible fat from meats and skin from poultry before eating.
  - Use lower fat cooking methods – like baking, broiling, roasting, stewing and steaming. Avoid frying foods, since this greatly raises the calorie and fat content.
  - Choose low-fat or non-fat dairy products.
  - Watch added fats from toppings – like cheese, butter, margarine, mayonnaise, and salad dressing.
- Eat less added sugars like those found in table sugar, honey, sweets, pastries and desserts.
  - Try products that are sweetened with artificial sweeteners instead – like Equal, Splenda or Sweet n Low.
- Avoid high-calorie beverages like regular sodas, fruit juice, and alcohol. Instead:
  - Quench your thirst with water with a squeeze of lemon.
  - Use diet drinks.
  - Limit your intake of alcohol. Ask your physician about what is a safe amount of alcohol for you.

## **BE ACTIVE**

How do you get the most health benefits from exercise? Try making exercise a daily habit. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends that adults aim for at least 30 minutes of activity most days of the week.

If your goal is to lose weight or prevent weight gain, 60 to 90 minutes of physical activity a day may be needed.

But don't set the bar too high when you're just getting started. Start slow, and gradually increase your daily activity levels.

Check out the USDA's MyPyramid for great tips on planning meals and activity and monitoring your progress at [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov).

## **Every Step Counts – Tips for increasing activity levels**

- Limit TV, computer and video game use.
- Schedule family exercise time.
- Get an exercise video or exercise equipment for use at home.
- Walk the dog.
- Do errands by foot or bike.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Park farther away or get off the bus one stop early and walk the rest of the way.
- Join a walking group, aerobics class, sports team, local pool, gym or community center.

## **Trying to stay motivated? Try these tips:**

- Choose a variety of enjoyable activities – this will keep your workout more interesting.
- Set realistic goals, at a reasonable pace.
- Plan exercise into your weekly schedule.
- Find an exercise buddy – you can rely on each other for support and motivation.
- Keep an exercise log – writing down what we do helps keep us focused.
- Set a non-food reward for progress in meeting your goal.

## **BE AWARE AND PLAN**

Checking in with yourself to think about how you're doing is a key step in reaching a healthy body weight.

- Check your body weight once a week and keep a logbook.
- Keep a daily food journal. Writing what we eat and drink helps us plan meals ahead of time, and think before we eat.
- Develop a plan to substitute new or favorite activities in place of “bored” or “stress” eating.