Tips for Getting to a Healthy Weight

About two-thirds of adults are overweight or obese. So it's easy to see why so many people want to lose at least a couple of pounds, and sometimes more. Losing weight is not easy. We have such fast-paced lives. Time for exercise and preparing healthy meals can be hard to come by. But if you put your mind to it and stick to your goals, you can have success.

Keep in mind that for losing weight, slow and steady is best. Small changes can have big results. Crash diets, gimmicks, and weight loss supplements are not the way to go and can sometimes be dangerous. In fact, people who lose just one to two pounds each week have the best chance of keeping it off. Consider that one pound is equal to 3500 calories. To lose one to two pounds in one week, you'll need to reduce your calories by about 500 to 1000 per day. You can do this by eating fewer calories, burning more calories through physical activity, or a combination of both.

Here are some practical tips you can use to help with your weight loss plan:
- Set goals. Be realistic.
- Write down the reasons you want to lose weight. Post this list somewhere you can see it often to help you stay motivated.
- Write down everything you eat for a few days so you have a realistic idea of what and when you are eating.
- Try to avoid bad habits that can cause weight gain, such as eating too fast, eating when you're not hungry, skipping meals, and always having dessert.
- Don't feel like you always need to "clean your plate."
- Eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean meats.
- Eat less food with high fat and sugar content.
- Read nutrition information on food labels. Pay attention to serving sizes.
- Bake or grill foods instead of frying or breading them.
- If you indulge in a high-calorie food, make sure to limit yourself to only a small portion.
- Set specific goals for exercising, such as the amount of time you will spend and how many times you will exercise each week.
- Choose an activity you enjoy. Walking is a good place to start.
- Pair up with an exercise buddy, friend, or family member, to help you stay motivated.
- Consider working with a dietitian or trainer or joining a gym or health club if you need more structure.
- Don't get discouraged by setbacks. Keep moving forward toward your goal.

As you lose weight, your dress size or pants size is likely to drop as well. But you will also feel better and have more energy. Plus, keeping a healthy weight can lower your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar. Keeping these numbers in check lowers your risk of serious health problems like diabetes, heart attacks, and strokes.

There are medicines that can help people lose weight, but they aren't for everybody. Even with the medicines, you'll need to stick with a healthy lifestyle to see good results. If you have questions about these medicines, talk to your health care provider.

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