

## Managing Your Weight: Keys to Success

Most people understand that to maintain or achieve a healthy weight, you need to eat less high-calorie food and exercise more often. However, most people still struggle to lose weight or have a hard time keeping the weight off. Here are 3 keys to healthy weight management.

### Key 1: Keep track

#### ***Food tracking***

Almost everyone who loses weight and keeps it off changes the type of food they eat. They also keep a record of all the food and beverages they eat and drink every day. Tracking what you eat and drink will help you learn about your eating habits and patterns.

Remember to:

- Write down everything you eat and drink (including water) and when you ate it.
- Write down how much you eat and drink. If you can, weigh or measure your food. Otherwise, use your best guess about portion sizes.
- Write down what you eat or drink right away. If you wait until the end of the day, your memory may be less accurate.
- Try an internet-based e-log or smartphone app to make tracking easy and timely. Most of these apps are free.
- Remember to include sauces, condiments, dressings and toppings such as:
  - Sugar and honey
  - Whole milk, skim milk or cream in coffee
  - Butter or oil on bread
  - Mayonnaise, ketchup, relish, salsa and mustard
- Be honest! Correct information will help you get better results.

#### ***Activity tracking***

Most people (about 9 out of 10) who lose weight and keep it off get about 1 hour of physical activity each day. It does not have to be all at once — walking several times a day counts. Exercise will help you build muscle while losing extra fat.

- If you write down or use an app to record how much activity you are doing, you are more likely to continue doing it.
- Tracking devices such as pedometers can help you measure how many steps you take every day.

## ***Weight tracking***

Most people who lose weight and keep it off weigh themselves at least once a week.

- Weigh yourself on the same day of the week and at the same time of day.
- Record your weight to keep track of your progress. A healthy amount to lose is about 1 to 2 pounds each week. Some weeks you may lose more weight than other weeks. Some weeks you may lose no weight at all. Try to be on a “losing trend.”

## **Key 2: Gain and maintain a social support network**

It is important for friends and family to support you and your lifestyle changes to lose weight and keep it off.

- Invite your family and friends to try new, healthier food choices with you.
- Ask your family to not bring unhealthy foods into your home.
- Ask co-workers and friends to stop encouraging unhealthy food choices or offering you unhealthy foods.
- Plan social activities with your family and friends that do not revolve around eating unhealthy foods. Here are some ideas:
  - Have a game night.
  - Take a class that interests you.
  - Go for walks together.
  - Workout at the gym.

## **Key 3: Make a plan and stick to it**

### ***At home***

- Change things around you to support healthy eating.
- Clean out “trigger foods” (foods that are difficult to stop eating).
- Use smaller plates, bowls and cups to make portion control easier.

### ***Outside your home***

- Avoid a daily route that passes a tempting restaurant or coffee shop.
- Know what you are going to order from restaurant menus ahead of time.
- Plan for social events that may include trigger foods. Bring a healthy food option such as a fruit salad or veggie tray.
- Watch movies at home if you know you cannot pass up super-sized soda, popcorn and candy at the theater.