

Setting Good Goals for Managing Your Weight

As you work on losing weight, your care team will ask you to make a lot of changes to your lifestyle. You might become overwhelmed when thinking about change. Change can be hard, but you can do it. When you think about making changes, ask yourself:

Do I want to change, and what do I want to change?

Thinking about the pros and the cons of both staying the same and of changing can be helpful. It can give you a chance to explore your reasons for changing. It can help you understand why change can be so difficult and also so rewarding.

Benefits and costs

Fill in the table on the next page with the pros and cons of both changing and staying the same. To brainstorm, you can ask yourself what will happen if you change your eating habits:

- How will I feel about myself if I change?
- How will I feel about myself if I do not change?
- How will changing impact my quality of life?
- How will changing impact my physical health?
- What will happen if I do not change?
- How could my life be better if I change?
- How are other people around me affected by my behavior now?
- How would they be affected if I change?
- What problems might I have if I change?
- What could get in the way of change?
- What are the risks of trying to change?
- What are the risks of staying the same?

	Benefits (Pros)	Costs (Cons)
Changing		
Staying the same		

This exercise may help you see why you want to change and what is holding you back. You may see the possible barriers to overcome. Or you may see what things need to change. It may show you that changing does take work.

Building better habits

Weight loss is not a behavior, but you may need to change some of your behaviors and habits to reach your weight loss goals. Once you have looked at the benefits and costs of change, you can think about building better habits. That starts by answering 2 questions:

What are the behaviors you want to put in place to lose weight?

What do you want to accomplish?

SMART goals

To make change happen, you will need to set goals. Make sure your goals are “SMART.” This means:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Action-oriented
- Realistic
- Time-based

This will help you build confidence and reach your goal. Here is an example of a SMART goal for change:

- **Desired outcome:** Lose 10% of my body weight.
- **Actionable steps:** Give more attention to my diet through tracking calories. Create a plan for walking.
- **SMART goals:**
 - **Specific:**
 - I will track what I eat after a meal or snack by using a food tracking app on my phone.
 - I will take a 10-minute walk or more after dinner Monday through Friday.
 - I will invite my family member to walk with me.
 - **Measurable:**
 - I will track what I eat 4 days per week on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.
 - I will track my steps every day. I will keep track of how many steps I do on average each week.
 - **Action-oriented:**
 - I will download a food tracking app to my phone today.
 - I will let my partner know that I will be tracking 4 days per week.
 - I will buy a fit bit online after work today. I will talk to my family today about my plan for walking.
 - **Realistic:**
 - I know that tracking 7 days a week is too much, but 4 days a week feels reasonable.
 - Starting with a 10-minute walk instead of 30 minutes feels more doable.
 - **Time-based:**
 - I will start tracking tomorrow (Wednesday) and aim to keep up with this plan for 2 weeks.
 - Then I will take a closer look at how many calories I am taking in each day and make more changes from there.
 - I will start walking as soon as my fit bit arrives.
 - I will check the average steps each week and increase the number of steps by 10% each week.

Create your first SMART goal here:

- Desired outcome _____

- Actionable steps _____

- SMART goals:
 - Specific _____

 - Measurable _____

 - Action-oriented _____

 - Realistic _____

 - Time-based _____

Now, take a look at your SMART goals. How do you feel about reaching the goals? Rate your likelihood for following through on each action. Use a scale from 1 to 10 (1 = not at all likely and 10 = extremely likely) Be sure your actions score 7 or above. Anything less than that does not set you up for success. You may need to adjust your low scores to feel more doable. Do not judge small steps that feel very doable as “not good enough.” Start where you are and build from there.

Your care team is here to support you in your weight loss journey. If you have any questions about changing your eating habits, please ask your care team.