

## Managing Your Weight: Keys to Success

Most people understand that to manage a healthy weight you need to eat less high calorie food and exercise more often. But, most people still struggle to lose weight or have a hard time keeping the weight off. Below are the evidence-based “3 Keys” to healthy weight management.

### Key 1: Keep Track

#### ***Food Tracking***

Most people who lose weight and keep it off change the type of food that they eat. They also keep a record of all the food and beverages they eat and drink every day. Remember to:

- Write down everything you eat and drink (including water) and when you ate it.
- Write down how much you ate. If you can, measure food amounts or use your best guess about portion sizes.
- Try an internet based e-log or phone app to make tracking easy and timely. Most of these apps are free.
- Remember condiments and add-ons such as:
  - Sugar, honey
  - Whole/skim milk or cream in coffee
  - Butter/oil on bread
  - Mayo, ketchup, relish, salsa, mustard
- Be honest! Good information will only help you get better results.

#### ***Activity Tracking***

Most people who lose weight and keep it off get at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day. It doesn't have to be all at once – walking several times a day counts.

- Exercise builds muscle while losing extra fat.
- If you write down how much activity you are doing, you are more likely to continue doing it. There are many tracking devices that you can use that measure how many steps you take every day

#### ***Weigh Yourself***

Most people who lose weight and keep it off weigh themselves several times a week.

- Weigh yourself on the same day of week and at the same time of day.
- Record the weight to keep track your progress. 1 to 2 pounds per week is healthy. Some weeks you may lose more than other weeks (or may not lose at all). Make sure you try to be on a “losing trend.”

## Key 2: Find Your Support Network

Ask friends and family to support you and all the changes you attempt to lose weight and keep it off. You can do this by:

- Asking your family and friends to try new, healthier food choices with you.
- Asking your family to not bring unhealthy foods into your home.
- Asking co-workers and friends to stop encouraging or offering you unhealthy food choices.
- Planning social activities with your family and friends that do not revolve around eating unhealthy foods. Some ideas are:
  - Having a game night
  - Taking a class in something that interests you
  - Going for walks
  - Visiting the gym

## Key 3: Make a Plan

### ***At Home***

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

### ***Outside Home***

- Avoid a daily route that passes a favorite restaurant or coffee shop.
- Know what you are going to order from the restaurant menu ahead of time.
- Plan for social events that you know will not include trigger foods. Bring a healthy food option such as a fruit salad or veggie tray.

## Northwestern Medicine – Health Information Resources

For more information, contact Northwestern Memorial Hospital’s Alberto Culver Health Learning Center (HLC) at [hlc@nm.org](mailto:hlc@nm.org), or by calling 312.926.5465. You may also visit the HLC on the 3rd floor, Galter Pavilion at 251 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL. Health information professionals can help you find the information you need and provide you with personal support at no charge.

For more information about Northwestern Medicine, please visit our website at [nm.org](http://nm.org).

*Para asistencia en español, por favor llamar al Departamento de Representantes para Pacientes al 312.926.3112.*

The entities that come together as Northwestern Medicine are committed to representing the communities we serve, fostering a culture of inclusion, delivering culturally competent care, providing access to treatment and programs in a nondiscriminatory manner and eliminating healthcare disparities. For questions, please call either Northwestern Memorial Hospital’s Patient Representatives Department at 312.926.3112, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363, the Northwestern Lake Forest Patient Relations manager at 847.535.8282 and/or the Northwestern Medical Group Patient Representatives Department at 312.695.1100, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363.

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