

10 Tips to Maintain Healthy Weight

By Lisa Drayer, MA, RD

Milk Your Diet

- **Switch out your soft drink for fat free milk.** Reach for a glass of fat free milk instead of sugar-sweetened soft drinks, a move that can not only cut calories, but also give you a big boost of nutrients. Compared to nutrient-void soft-drinks, a glass of milk is packed with nine essential nutrients and is one of the best sources of calcium and vitamin D.
- **Include protein in every meal and snack.** Protein promotes satiety and helps preserve muscle mass during weight loss. Retaining muscle is important because muscle burns more calories than body fat. Good sources of protein include fish, poultry, beans and lowfat and fat free milk.

Avoid the Fad Diet Trap

- **Avoid fad diets.** Fad diets can make you feel tired, irritable and deprived. Moreover, the chance for keeping the weight off for good is difficult. Adopt healthy habits that are sustainable and suitable for your lifestyle as well as consider seeking the advice of registered dietitian for specific guidance on diets.
- **Watch out for diet supplements.** Manufacturers do not have to prove safety or efficacy of supplements before they hit store shelves. In fact, according to a recent report from the Federal Trade Commission*, there are no known supplements that give you a permanent alteration in your body's metabolism.
- **Avoid diet plans that claim you don't need to exercise in order to lose weight.** Exercise is half the battle when it comes to weight loss, and it has other beneficial effects on health, including decreasing stress, elevating HDL or "good" cholesterol levels and helping to control diabetes.

*<http://www.ftc.gov/os/2003/12/031209weightlossrpt.pdf>

Create an Action Plan to Move More

- **Include at least 30 minutes of physical activity on most days.** There are dozens of activities you can choose from to get your heart pumping including jogging, swimming, cycling, skiing or walking. If you don't want to pursue a structured exercise program, find other creative ways to burn calories such as dancing, cleaning the house or playing with your kids.
- **Set mini-goals to maintain your healthy weight.** You might set an attainable mini-goal of taking the stairs instead of the elevator or simply walking more throughout each day. Your mini-goals should be realistic, specific and should focus on behavior change.

Eat Smarter

- **Eat six small meals instead of three large meals, spaced 3 to 4 hours apart.** Believe it or not, eating burns calories. When you eat small meals throughout the day, your body must continuously burn calories as it digests, absorbs and metabolizes food.
- **Consume better-for-you treats.** Most people love to snack, but snacking doesn't have to mean cookies or chips. Good alternatives to traditional treats include air-popped popcorn, frozen fruit bars, low-fat chocolate pudding or a latte made with lowfat or fat free milk.
- **Give yourself a daily calorie budget for treats.** Allot about 100-150 calories per day. This way, you can have what you enjoy when you crave it, but your calories and weight will be in check.

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