

Steps to a Healthy Weight

Lexington-Fayette County Health Department

A Healthy Body Weight

Achieving and maintaining a healthy body weight is important for good health. A healthy weight lowers your risk of heart disease, diabetes and some cancers. If you are overweight, losing weight by just 5% (as little as 10 pounds for someone who weighs 200 pounds), can greatly reduce risk factors for heart disease and stroke.

Is My Weight Healthy?

BMI, or body mass index, is a measure of your weight compared to your height. Your healthcare provider may use it to decide if you are at a healthy body weight. Use the formula below to calculate your BMI.

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{Weight in pounds (lb)}}{\text{Height (inches)} \times \text{Height (inches)}} \times 703$$

For adults over 20 years old, BMI falls into one of these categories:

BMI	Weight Status
Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5-24.9	Normal
25-29.9	Overweight
30 and above	Obese

Note: BMI for children and teens is based on gender and age specific charts.



What Steps Can I Take Towards A Healthy Weight?

Here are some great tips to lose weight and keep it off:

- Cut back on calories and fat.
- Be physically active most days of the week.
- Eat breakfast every day.
- Keep a record of your weight; what you eat and drink and what you do for physical activity.

Read over the list above and write down which approach will work best for you. Just remember that studies show it's much easier to lose weight when you eat a healthy diet and exercise.



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Simple Steps to Lifestyle Change

It is important to choose goals that will help you lose weight. Put a check mark next to the changes you are willing and able to try. Don't try to change everything at once. Gradual changes in your daily routine can lead to a successful weight loss and lifestyle change.

Ways to cut back on calories and fat:

- Eat smaller servings of high-calorie foods.
- Try to eat three sensible meals at regular times throughout the day. Skipping meals may lead to eating larger portions of high-calorie, high-fat foods at your next meal or snack.
- Eat breakfast everyday.
- Ask for salad dressing and sauces "on the side" and then use as little as possible.
- Take seconds of vegetables or salads instead of higher-fat, higher-calorie parts of a meal such as meats or desserts.
- Include a fruit or vegetable with every meal or snack.
- Cook in low-fat ways: roast, broil, grill, microwave, steam, or bake. Use nonstick pans or cooking sprays.
- Cut back on high-fat toppings, such as butter, margarine, sour cream, regular salad dressing, mayonnaise, or gravy. Instead, season your food with herbs, spices, salsa, lemon juice, or other low-fat choices.
- Avoid eating in front of the TV or while busy with other activities. Pay attention to what you are eating and fully enjoy the smell and taste of your foods.
- Read food labels. Choose the products with fewer calories and less fat.
- Stock your kitchen with low-calorie, low-fat snacks, such as air-popped popcorn, pretzels, fruit and vegetables.
- Other things I can do: _____

Ways to be more physically active:

- Take a 30-minute walk every day. Split up your daily activity—try a 10-minute walk after each meal. If you haven't been very active recently, check with your healthcare team first. Start off with a 10- to 15-minute walk every other day. Then little by little walk farther and walk more often.
- Find a physical activity you enjoy, like swimming, dancing, bicycling, or doing the exercises on video tape/DVD.
- Be active around the house: work in the yard, play with the kids, get up to change the TV channel, and walk around while you talk on the phone.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Walk instead of drive whenever you can.
- Park at the far end of the shopping center lot and walk to the store.
- Other things I can do: _____

