

CERTIFIED WOMEN'S HEALTH COUNSELOR ONLINE COURSE: SESSION 14

• Weight Control

While the holidays are an exciting and joyous time, they can also lead to unnecessary weight gain for many people. The extra pounds that people pack on during the holidays are quite common, but that doesn't mean that they won't affect your health. In fact, recent studies have shown that many people fail to lose those extra pounds over the following year, contributing to slow and steady weight gain as a person gets older. This could potentially lead to an individual becoming overweight or even obese, so it's important to be vigilant of your holiday weight gain and take steps to prevent it.



Food Availability

It's no surprise that the traditional holiday foods are a contributing factor to holiday weight gain. Some of the traditional treats and desserts for Thanksgiving, Christmas and other winter holidays are packed with calories and fat. Things like pecan pie, pumpkin pie, holiday cookies, candies and more are all things that people may encounter regularly during the holiday season. The availability of these foods, even if you aren't the one making them, can lead to poor eating choices during the holidays.

How to Avoid It: Don't stop yourself from eating these treats entirely or you might find yourself binging on them later. Instead, be careful about portion control. Choose one dessert instead of trying a little of everything that's offered. You can also look online for healthy ways to make your favorite desserts. Often times, a few ingredient substitutions can significantly cut back on the amount of calories and fat in a particular dish.

Lack of Exercise

There are a host of reasons that contribute to people working out less during the holidays. Traveling to see family and friends, and going to holiday parties can cut into your workout schedule, and fewer hours of daylight combined with colder weather can limit your outdoor activities. Additionally, the exhaustion of shopping for gifts, making elaborate meals or planning big parties can lead to less energy left for exercising. When less exercise is combined with a few bad food choices, it doesn't take long for the extra pounds to start showing up on the scale.

How to Avoid It: It can be hard to avoid the busy schedule that comes along with the holidays, but that doesn't mean you have to cut out exercise entirely. Even if you're busy on a particular day, try to fit in at least half of the exercises you would have done on a normal day. Also, add in more exercise in little ways to make up for lost time. While shopping, park further away from stores and take the stairs instead of the escalator.

Stress

The holidays can be filled with stress, whether it's trying to get your holiday cards sent out on time or finding the right present for your spouse. Additionally, many people deal with emotional stress associated with their families during this time of year. The holidays also mark a peak in issues for many people who deal with depression, known as the holiday or Christmas blues. In many cases, this stress can lead to a lack of sleep, overeating or putting off physical activity, all of which can contribute to weight gain.

How to Avoid It: Cut back on your obligations during the holidays if you feel your busy schedule will seriously stress you out. Additionally, those who deal with mental struggles or emotional issues during the holidays should consider seeing a therapist in the months leading up to the holidays. Taking these steps before stress occurs can keep you mentally healthy while also helping you make the right food and exercise choices during the holidays.

Less Sunlight

During the winter months, some people suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD. This temporary episode of depression is affected by lack of exposure to sunlight, among other things. People with this condition have an increased appetite and a lack of energy, both of which can result in holiday weight gain.

How to Avoid It: Make the most of the hours of sunlight by going outside for lunch or getting a quick walk in before work in the morning. You can also buy special lamps which provide extra light to ease the symptoms of SAD. You can also see a doctor to find out if drugs may help with your condition.

Biology

Some people are more predisposed to winter weight gain, perhaps because of genetics. Some researchers believe our bodies tend to keep extra weight during the winter months to echo the weight gain that was needed hundreds of years ago for people to survive through the cold weather.

How to Avoid It: While a few extra pounds may be part of your body's natural cycle, your weight gain should never be dramatic due to this biological factor. Allow yourself a pound or two of fluctuation, but be sure to keep eating healthy and exercising regularly to prevent any further weight gain.

Lack Of Sleep And Weight Gain: Is There A Connection?

You may be surprised to learn that not getting an adequate amount of sleep each night can



cause you to gain weight. People gain weight in many different ways, and lack of sleep can lead to weight gain for a variety of reasons. While one night of restless sleep isn't likely to pack on the pounds, repeated sleepless nights in conjunction with other behaviors will put you at risk for weight gain over time. Recent studies support the claim that poor sleep can lead to excess weight gain. If you are having difficulty sleeping, know the risks and take steps to improve your nightly slumber.

How Much Sleep Does the Average Person Need?

The appropriate amount of sleep needed is dependent upon several factors, most predominantly age. Many people feel as though just a few hours of sleep is enough to get them through the day, however, this is usually not the case. People who are not getting an adequate amount of sleep for consecutive nights will not have mental sharpness and alertness. Suggested sleep guidelines according to age are:

- Approximately 15 hours for infants
- Approximately 13 hours for toddlers
- Approximately 10 hours for school-aged children
- Approximately 8 hours for adults

Who Might Need Additional Sleep?

While the above-mentioned sleep guidelines are meant for the average person, there may be contributing factors that will increase a person's need for additional sleep. An individual's nightly sleep requirement is likely to increase due to the following circumstances:

- **Pregnancy:** When a woman is pregnant, her body goes through many changes. These changes will likely increase her body's need for sleep, thus adding the need for a few additional hours of sleep above the average amount.
- **Aging:** As the body grows older, an individual's sleeping habits will likely change. The person who once slept like a log may find himself waking frequently during the night and becoming a very light sleeper. These changes will increase the older adults need for sleep and possibly the need for a daytime nap.
- **Sleep deprivation:** The longer your body goes without sleep, the more difficult it may be to play catch up. If you are experiencing sleep deprivation over a series of nights, your body's need for sleep will increase, thus increasing your average sleep requirement.
- **Quality of sleep:** Regardless of how many hours of sleep you receive, the quality of sleep you are getting is just as, if not more important. If your sleep is frequently interrupted and you experience night waking, you will need to get more than the average number of hours of sleep.

Can Lack Of Sleep Cause Weight Gain?

According to the New York Obesity Nutrition Research Center at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital, the answer is – yes. Lack of sleep can cause weight gain, and does so in a variety of ways. Additionally, a new study published in the Annals of Internal Medicine suggests that a few nights of bad sleep can cause an otherwise healthy body to become insulin resistant. Weight gain can occur for a variety of reasons, including:

- A lack of adequate sleep may cause the body's metabolism to become sluggish because it is trying to conserve energy. A slower metabolism results in the body releasing cortisol, a hormone that is responsible for triggering hunger. This lack of energy forces the body to crave an energy source, namely food.
- Insulin resistance is the pathway to obesity and diabetes. This study suggested that a mere four consecutive nights of sleep lasting just 4 hours each could alter the body's resistance to insulin. In a typically healthy person, when sugar is ingested, the pancreas responds by producing insulin and signaling the body's cells to absorb the newly ingested glucose. When insulin resistance is present, the cells do not receive the signals and thus do not properly absorb the glucose, causing health problems.

Factors That Contribute To Lack of Sleep and Weight Gain

Aside from insulin resistance and a sluggish metabolism, a lack of adequate sleep may cause you to gain weight for other reasons. Not getting enough sleep can cause you to not only gain weight, but also have difficulty taking the weight off. Lack of sleep can affect weight in the following ways:

- The less sleep that you get, the less energy your body will use to burn calories.
- The later that you stay up at night; the more likely you are to snack late at night.
- Lack of sleep results in an increase in production of the hormone Ghrelin. This hormone is responsible for appetite, fat production and body growth. The less you sleep the more hungry you become.
- The less sleep that you get, the harder it is to burn fat.
- The less you sleep, the more opportunity you have to eat.

What Can You Do To Improve Sleep?

Many factors can contribute to a less than stellar night's sleep. While we may not be able to control all of the things that can interfere with our sleep, we may be able to come up with an effective sleep plan. Using guidelines to attempt to achieve a better night's sleep can be an effective way to set you on the path to improved sleep. Tips for a better quality of sleep include:

- **Try to get to bed at the same time each night.** Setting your body on a sleep-wake schedule is a great way to ensure that you are getting an adequate night's sleep, even on your days off.
- **Don't go to bed hungry or full.** The discomfort and restlessness that is associated with hunger or feeling stuffed can interfere with your sleep.
- **Beware of ingesting caffeine or nicotine just before bed.** These drugs are stimulants and may prevent you from falling asleep.
- **Avoid drinking alcohol.** While it may tend to make you sleepy at first, it may disrupt your sleep during the night.
- **Choose a routine that will help you to wind down.** Whether it's reading or taking a bath, creating a bedtime routine may help ease you to sleep.
- **Be sure that you are comfortable.** Choose a pillow and blanket that is soothing to you and adjust the room's temperature and lighting for optimal sleeping.

Lack of sleep can affect your body's ability to maintain a healthy weight, lose weight and put you at risk for a variety of health problems. If you are having trouble falling asleep or remaining asleep, try creating a bedtime routine and follow the suggested guidelines above. If you are still having sleeping difficulties or find yourself feeling tired even after receiving a full night of sleep, it is important to contact your doctor.

Sleeping Better At Night

It's hard enough getting sleep when you have a busy schedule, but it's even worse when you have trouble getting a good rest at night. Whether you have trouble getting to sleep, staying asleep or getting yourself out of bed in the morning, there are many problems that can get in the way of feeling fully rested. Follow these tips to improve your sleep patterns and feel more refreshed and reenergized every morning.

Stick to a Schedule

One of the best ways to get the best rest at night is to create a firm schedule for going to sleep and waking up. If possible, select a time to go to bed when you naturally begin to feel sleepy. This will help combat insomnia by giving in to your body's natural cycle. If you tend to feel awake most of the night, it may take a week or two on your new schedule to begin feeling naturally sleepy at the time you choose to go to bed. Some people actually feel that waking up at the same time every day is more challenging than picking a set time to go to sleep. For the best results, you'll need to continue that same sleep schedule even on weekends when you may be tempted to sleep in longer or stay up later than usual.

Use Naps Wisely

Naps are not always a bad thing. In fact, they can even improve the sleep you get at night since they prevent you from altering the sleep cycle you've developed. Try to nap only if you feel exceptionally tired during the day. Doing so will keep you from developing a reliance on naps while still allowing you to get your needed rest. When you find a nap is necessary, try to do it in the early afternoon. Limit your naps to around 30 minutes to prevent insomnia later on.

Avoid Certain Foods and Drinks at Night

To get better rest while you sleep, avoid eating large meals at least two hours before going to bed. If you get heartburn easily, avoid spicy and fatty foods for dinner. Furthermore, you should avoid nicotine and caffeine in the evenings since these stimulants can make it harder to fall asleep. Steer clear of alcoholic drinks before bed since these may disrupt your sleep patterns. If you do need to eat or drink near bedtime, try items which can naturally promote sleep like milk, eggs, avocados, bananas, tuna **and** oats.

Make Your Bedroom More Sleep-Friendly

A great way to get better sleep is to do everything possible to make your bedroom more conducive to sleep. If you're sensitive to light while sleeping, get thick drapes to cover your windows or use an eye cover. If noises wake you up easily, use earplugs, a fan, a humidifier or a white noise machine in your bedroom. Spend time shopping for the right mattress and pillow, and adjust your thermostat to the best temperature for you. The key is to create the perfect environment that matches your personal sleep preferences. It's also helpful to keep your bedroom as a "sleep and sex only" space - watch TV, pay bills or work in other rooms whenever possible.

Create a Relaxing Bedtime Routine

Doing something calming before bed can help you wind down after a long day and get ready to fall asleep. Try reading a book, having a cup of caffeine-free tea, listening to soothing music or taking a hot bath before heading to bed for the night. Eventually, this will become just as much of your sleep cycle as your set times for going to sleep and waking up.

Get Some Exercise

Exercising regularly can help you stick to your sleep schedule and fall asleep better. For most people, a morning or early afternoon exercise routine seems to work best because they feel more energized after working out. As an added bonus, the exercise should help lower stress and promote relaxation, which can also help you sleep better at night.

Although there are some prescription and over-the-counter medications to help you fall asleep, it's much better to develop a natural sleep cycle on your own whenever possible. If you've tried the steps above and still can't seem to get a good night's rest, talk to your doctor about other options.

Portion Control for Weight Loss

It's no secret that portion sizes appear to be increasing. According to the National Heart and Blood Institute (NHLBI), restaurant portion sizes have more than doubled in the last two decades. Between triple-decker burgers, supersized fast food meals and jumbo sodas, it's easy to see how American's idea of portion size may have become distorted. It's also no big surprise that eating larger portions often means gaining weight.

Understand Serving Size

It is common to confuse serving size with portion size, but they are not the same thing.

Serving size is what experts recommend, and what is often on nutritional labeling. Portion size is the amount of food you eat. Many times, portion size and serving size don't match up. Learning what serving size is can prevent you from eating portions larger than recommended.



Know Your Recommended Daily Allowances

Understanding the recommended servings you should eat from each food group can help you choose the appropriate portion size. The nutritional requirements you need to maintain good health are known as the recommended daily allowances. The requirements are based on your gender and age. Specific recommendations are listed for servings of fruits, veggies, protein, fat and grains.

Learn To Eyeball Servings

It's not always convenient to measure portion size with a measuring cup or food scale. Learning to eyeball serving size is the next best thing. For example, a serving of meat should be 3 ounces, which is about the size of the palm of your hand. The recommended serving size of grains, such as rice or pasta, is about one cup, which is roughly the size of your fist.

Downsize Your Dishes

It may seem simple, but switching to smaller plates when you eat may be one way to eat less. Call it mind over matter, but research indicates it works. According to Rutgers University, the smaller the plate, the less food is consumed. Studies show you may be able to shave off more than 100 calories a meal by eating off a smaller plate.



Don't Eat out of the Container, Box or Bag

One of the worst things you can do if you are watching portion size is eat out of the container or bag. It's easy to munch on snacks out of the bag and not realize how much you have eaten, especially if you are watching television. Instead of eating right from the bag, measure out a portion and put the bag away.

Avoid All-You-Can Eat Buffets

Buffets are not the best place to practice portion control. Unless you have a lot of discipline, you may want to avoid the all-you-can eat buffets if you are trying to lose weight. If you do go, load up on veggies, fruit and healthy salad ingredients. Also, add a little protein, such as grilled or baked fish to fill you up. Skip going for seconds, which may lead to selecting unhealthy choices.

Take Half Home

When you dine out, portions are often much larger than recommended serving sizes. One way to deal with restaurant servings is cut your meal in half before you even start eating. Taking half of your meal home to eat later will prevent you from eating too much. Another option is splitting a meal with your dining partner.

Divide Your Plate

According to the American Heart Association, before you eat, divide up your plate into the four food groups: half of the plate should include fruits and veggies, a fourth should be grains, and the rest of the plate can be for proteins. Dividing your plate into the recommended servings of the major food groups is an easy way to visualize appropriate portions.

Buy Single Serving Snacks

Single serving size packages are becoming increasingly popular. Not only are they convenient to throw in a lunch bag or take with you on the go, but portion size is already measured. Single serving sizes of crackers, nuts and pretzels are good choices if you are watching your weight.

Eat Slowly

It's easy to get into the habit of rushing through meals, especially if you're busy, but eating too fast can cause you to eat more. It takes your brain a certain amount of time to register you're full. If you eat fast, you will likely consume more food before your brain sends the signal you are full. Eating slower also helps make digestion easier and may prevent heartburn and indigestion.

Portion control is not always easy, but is often the key to losing weight. Learning what size portions your body needs to function optimally is the first step. Portion control does not necessarily mean eliminating certain types of foods. Instead, it means learning to eat in moderation. As you learn what serving sizes should be and adjust to eating recommended portions, you may find you lose weight and feel healthier.

Important Reasons to Properly Chew Your Food

Chewing food properly is not something most people give much thought to, but it is an



important step in digestion. When most people think of digestion, they may think it starts in the stomach; however, it starts before food even reaches the stomach. The digestive process starts as soon as food enters the mouth. Enzymes in the saliva, along with chewing, help break down the food you eat. Living in a fast paced society, it is easy to eat on the run and rush through meals. Chewing properly is often overlooked, but it is an important step to proper digestion, maintaining a healthy weight and overall good nutrition.

It Increases the Absorption of Vitamins, Minerals and Other Nutrients

When food is broken down thoroughly through chewing, it is easier for the nutrients to be absorbed by the intestines. For instance, certain foods, such as nuts and some raw vegetables cannot be broken down completely in the stomach and need to be chewed thoroughly. Also, while food is being chewed, the digestive system gets the message that food is on its way. This triggers the system to produce acids in the stomach that further digest food and help the body absorb needed nutrients.

Helps in Maintaining a Healthy Weight

The longer a person takes to chew his or her food, the longer it will take to finish a meal. People who eat slower tend to eat less. As people eat, a message is sent to the brain to indicate that they are getting full. If you chew too fast and plow through a meal, you may be done with your food, but the brain still thinks you are hungry. When this occurs, you are more likely to continue to eat and consume more calories, which can lead to weight gain or interfere with weight loss.

Allows Food Longer Exposure to Saliva

This is important for a couple of reasons. Enzymes in the saliva help break down the food. For instance, lingual lipase is one of the enzymes produced in the submandibular salivary glands under the tongue. This enzyme helps break down fats. Longer exposure to saliva while chewing means longer exposure to this enzyme. If fat is not broken down thoroughly and is left unprocessed, it can lead to digestive problems. Longer exposure to saliva through chewing properly also helps the food travel down the esophagus easier, since it lubricates or moistens the foods.

Less Energy is needed to Digest Properly Chewed Food

The body uses a great deal of energy to digest food. If you do not chew your food properly, other parts of the digestive system have to use more energy and work harder to break down the food. Smaller particles of food broken down by proper chewing allow the food to move through the entire digestive track easier. First the stomach can work more efficiently and quicker to break down food. From there food travels to the small intestines more efficiently.

Helps Teeth Stay Healthy

The process of chewing food properly also helps the teeth. It is a workout for bones holding the teeth and helps keep them strong. The saliva produced while chewing properly is needed to wash away bacteria in the mouth. The saliva released also helps clear food particles out of the mouth. If there is less bacteria in the mouth, there may be reduced plaque buildup and tooth decay.

Decreases Excess Bacteria in the Intestines

When a person does not chew properly, food particles that reach the stomach may be too big. Large food particles make it more difficult for the stomach to completely digest the food. Food may be left partially unprocessed, and digestion is not complete. This undigested food causes an increase in bacteria in the intestines, which may cause a variety of symptoms:

- Excessive bacteria can cause gas and bloating.
- Some people may develop diarrhea or constipation due to the bacteria overgrowth.
- Abdominal pain and cramping are also common symptoms of bacteria overgrowth in the digestive track.

Increases the Ability to Taste and Enjoy the Food

Everyone has rushed through a meal, not chewing well at one time or another. This prevents a person from really tasting the food, which may lead to not feeling satisfied with the meal. Meal time should be a time to relax and enjoy the pleasure of good food. Taking the time to chew each bite thoroughly, is not only good for the body, but can help feed the soul.

Although there are many reasons to properly chew your food, many people may still not adhere to it. Eating and chewing fast may become a habit. As with all habits, it may take a conscious effort to change and slow down and chew properly. There is not a steadfast rule on how many times to chew food. Various types and textures of food will require different amounts of chewing. A good rule to follow is to keep chewing until the food is almost liquefied. After a while, chewing properly will become second nature.

The New USDA Food Guide: The Healthy Plate

Almost everyone has heard of the Food Pyramid. It has existed as the hallmark for a healthy, balanced diet for many years. However, that's all going to change with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) *Healthy Plate*, which now serves as the icon for the new U.S. Dietary Guidelines. Here is a quick look at this new icon of a healthy and balanced diet that is meant to help people prepare and portion their meals properly.

The Healthy Plate Guide

The color-coded, four-part plate with dairy on the side includes the necessary components for a balanced diet:

- **Fruits:** The red portion of the plate.
- **Vegetables:** The green portion of the plate.
- **Grains:** The orange portion of the plate.
- **Protein:** The Purple portion of the plate.
- **Dairy:** A separate, blue section outside of the plate meant to be served on the side.



A quick look at the plate's structure shows fruits and vegetables making up half of the meal, with protein being the smallest portion, and the grains section being slightly larger than the protein section.

MyPlate Tips and Suggestions

The USDA Myplate website still offers the same nutritional tips and suggestions as MyPyramid such as:

- Balance calories by enjoying food while exercising portion control.
- Half of your food plate should consist of fruits and vegetables.
- Half of the grains being eaten as part of the Healthy Plate should be whole grains.
- Drink only fat-free or low-fat milk.
- Lower sodium intake by reading nutrition labels and selecting foods low in sodium.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks like soda.

Aside from these main tips, MyPlate also offers numerous suggestions on how to:

- Switch up the veggies you eat frequently like sweet potatoes, spinach and carrots.
- Utilize fresh fruit like apples, oranges, cantaloupe and bananas.
- Eat calcium rich foods like milk, yogurt, salmon or broccoli.
- Find lean sources of protein like chicken, tuna or mackerel.
- Achieve a balance between food and physical activity.
- Keep food safe to eat.

Benefits of the Healthy Plate vs. the Food Pyramid

Unlike the food pyramid, the Healthy Plate is simpler and makes meal preparation much easier. Since the icon is in the actual shape of a plate, the public is provided with a visual aid of how their own plate should look like, rather than navigating the Food Pyramid where foods that were meant to be eaten the most often were depicted at the bottom of the pyramid, while the foods that were meant to be eaten sparingly were at the top.

Just looking at the Food Pyramid can be quite confusing. One could easily assume that the foods placed at the top represent the healthiest foods, while foods at the very bottom are the unhealthiest. The Food Pyramid doesn't help with meal preparations or determining portion sizes either. After all, nobody portions out their meal in pyramid blocks. The Healthy Plate gives people an actual plate icon to use as a reference. If you're staring down at a plate mostly made of meat, some grains and a couple of vegetables, it's easy to determine that your plate is nutritionally unbalanced when you compare it to the Healthy Plate icon.



An outline of the benefits of the Healthy Plate vs. the Food Pyramid:

- Simple structure that is easier to understand than the pyramid structure.
- Easier to determine portion sizes.
- The plate icon is a better visual aid than the pyramid.
- A strong emphasis on fruits and vegetables as part of half of the plate, with veggies taking up even more space on the plate than fruits.
- The use of a "protein" section rather than a "meat" section, where protein sources other than animal flesh and byproducts can also be utilized.

Negative Aspects of the Healthy Plate

While the Healthy Plate seems like a better icon, overall, some nutritionists may argue that there are still some negative aspects that need to be addressed such as:

- A "grains" section of the plate where only half of the serving is recommended to be whole grains, which may seem like very little to some nutritionists.
- Lack of a "fats and oils" section, where good fats and oils, like omega 3 and monounsaturated fat, can be addressed with the necessary information for a healthy diet.

While such shortcomings leave little to argue about the benefits of the Healthy Plate, they are still issues that some people may want to have addressed before accepting it as the flagship for a healthy and well-balanced diet.

Using Calorie Counting For Weight-Loss



Most people have heard you should count your calories if you are trying to control weight. Still, it can be complicated to understand how many calories are needed to lose weight and maintain good health. Calories supply the body with the energy it needs to survive.

Without taking in enough calories, people can wind up lowering their metabolism and cause their body to function improperly. However, if too many calories are consumed without burning them, the calories are stored as fat, and weight-gain occurs. There needs to be a correct balance between taking in the right amount of calories to supply the body with the energy it needs, without overeating.

What Are Calories?

Understanding what calories are can be complicated, but it is essential to realize their importance. The technical definition of a calorie is the amount of heat needed to increase the temperature of one gram of water one degree Celsius. A simpler way to understand calories is by looking at them as a measure of energy. The body needs energy from calories in food to sustain all of its activities including basic functions, such as breathing, sleeping and circulation.

calories

(noun)

Tiny creatures that live in your closet and sew your clothes a little bit tighter every night.

Determining Caloric Needs

A person's individual caloric needs vary depending on several factors like age, gender, body-size and activity level. While calorie needs vary from person-to-person, they also change throughout a person's lifetime. Although calculating exact caloric needs can be complicated, it is important that a person has an estimate of how many calories he needs for proper weight management.

According to the University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC), an easy estimate for caloric needs for women is eating 10 to 12 calories per pound to maintain their current weight. Adult men need to eat between 13 to 15 calories per pound to maintain their weight. It is important to keep in mind, that the above calculation is an estimate. Age, activity level and a person's individual metabolic rate also need to be factored in to determine calorie needs.

Are All Calories Equal?

All calories are not equal in terms of nutritional benefits for the body. Carbohydrates, fats and protein are all needed for the body to function properly, but they are needed in different amounts. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the daily calorie breakdown for most adults should include the following:

- Calories from carbohydrates: 45 to 65 percent
- Calories from protein: 10 to 35 percent
- Calories from Fats: 20 to 35 percent

It is important for people to be aware of empty calories in their diet. Empty calories are considered foods that do not have any nutritional value and should be limited. Most empty calories are from sugars or solid fats. Common foods with mostly empty calories include candy, soda, butter and chips.

Burning Calories

In order to lose one pound, a person has to burn 3,500 calories more than he or she uses. This may seem like a lot, but if calories are reduced a little each day, it can add up over time. For instance, reducing calories by 500 every day over the course of one week can result in a one pound of weight-loss.

In addition to reducing the amount of calories taken in, a person can burn more calories through increased physical activity. Various forms of exercise can burn different amounts of calories depending on exertion level and duration. In addition to daily exercise, lifestyle changes can help people increase the amount of calories they burn. Simple changes to incorporate more activity into a person's lifestyle can help burn more calories, such as

taking the stairs whenever possible, walking more and participating in active hobbies.

Household Chores That Burn the Most Calories

Need a new way to feel motivated to do common household chores? Looking for an incentive to exercise more to burn calories? Well, you can kill two birds with one stone by doing these household chores that burn the most calories. The great thing about the household chores that made this list is they work out more than one muscle on your body. Some of these household chores even offer a full body workout.

Mowing the Lawn



This is one chore that you can really give you a full body workout. Depending on the size of your lawn, you can burn nearly 500 calories with a regular mowing job on your backyard and front yard. This household chore can effectively workout your forearms, trapezoids, back and most of your leg muscles. Now, if you have those types of lawnmowers that you can ride on, like a tractor, you're not burning any calories at all. For the best workout, you should be using a manual-reel mower.

Painting

Okay, so maybe painting your house isn't a common household chore, but painting anything, from a room to a fence, can be. Climbing up and down a ladder, along with brush strokes from side-to-side, while really swaying your hips, and up-and-down motions while bending down into squats can work out almost every muscle in your body. Remember to alternate hands when one arm gets tired and to evenly workout both arms.



Vacuuming



Work those biceps and triceps by vacuuming your entire house. You can work even more muscles by tightening your abdominals for every time you push the vacuum cleaner forward. Always remember to switch hands periodically to evenly workout both of your arms. Move furniture aside and vacuum in this commonly skipped areas to get an even better workout.

Pulling Weeds

Here's some more yard work that can really burn the calories, so put the weed spray away and get on your hands and knees and start pulling. By manually pulling out weeds from your garden, you can strengthen your grip, forearms and biceps. However, you may want to avoid this household chore if you are suffering from any knee issues.



Doing the Laundry



This may not seem like the most strenuous chore on the list, but it burns the most calories per year according to the Daily Mail. To reap the calorie burning benefits of doing the laundry, you need to complete the entire process on your own. That means carrying the dirty laundry to the washing machine, loading the dirty laundry, transferring the laundry to the dryer, unloading the laundry from the dryer, folding the clothes and returning them to where they belong. Hang the clothes individually to air dry them, or ironing amount to extra calories burned.

Washing the Car

The entire process of washing your car will not only save you some money from having to go to a carwash, it will also help you burn calories. The entire process of rinsing, scrubbing, drying and waxing can be used for exercises that work out your back, leg and arm muscles. Always make sure to alternate hands, and don't try to cut corners or else you'll end up with less of a workout and a car that isn't fully clean. Want to get more of a workout from this household chore? Try scrubbing your wheels and vacuuming the inside of your car.



Cleaning Your Floors



Notice how this household chore does not specify sweeping or mopping; that's because they are both categorized as one chore on this list for the sake of a better workout. According to an article by Shine, you can burn up to 240 calories per hour just by sweeping and mopping your floors. This is also an effective workout for both your upper and lower body, but it primarily focuses on your biceps and shoulder muscles.

Burning Calories While Doing Household Chores:

- The more effort you exert, the more calories you will burn.
- With each, repetitive movement, try to squeeze and isolate any muscles used. For example, when you push the vacuum cleaner, squeeze with your triceps, and then tighten your biceps when you pull the vacuum cleaner back.
- Tighten your abdominals repeatedly while doing any of the chores on this list to strengthen your core.
- Don't rush through your household chores. Be thorough and don't cut corners to maximize your workout.
- Adding some music to your household chores is just as effective as listening to music while working out. Music can also help motivate you and can help you set a pace for how fast you're completing these household chores.
- If you've been setting aside your chores to make time for a workout, try skipping your workout completely to do a bundle of household chores instead.

Cutting Calories Every Day

One of the easiest ways to drop excess weight is to start decreasing your caloric intake daily. Essentially, cutting calories can produce many potential health benefits for those suffering from obesity, high cholesterol and type-2 diabetes. The idea isn't so much like a crash diet, where a person would dramatically cut out nearly half of the recommended daily caloric intake, but to gradually reduce calories each day.

Eat More Vegetables

Eating more vegetables is one of the most obvious ways of cutting calories every day. Replacing portions of your meal with more veggies like carrots, or opting for lettuce instead of complex carbs will easily shave off a few extra calories. Eating vegetables accompanied with a healthy dip or spread is also a good way of cutting calories from snacks like cookies and chips.

Use Smaller Plates and Bowls

For many people, cutting calories is a psychological battle. People are often accustomed to cleaning everything off their plate, and if their usual dinner plate is the size of a regular serving platter, this can be a big problem. A quick way for cutting calories without even having to change the foods you eat is to use smaller plates and bowls for your food. This will limit your calories as long as you remember not to get a second helping.

Share

Every time you sit down for a meal or a quick snack, try sharing a portion of your food with someone else. This is another way to indulge on the same foods you like, while still cutting calories. If you are looking to eat healthy at your favorite restaurant, ask a friend or your date if they would be willing to split an entrée with you. This would also allow you to opt for a salad, soup or dessert without worrying as much about the extra calories since you've basically cut your meal in half.

Only Eat Half of Everything

If you are dining out, tell the waiter to only bring half of your meal out to your table, and put the other meal in a carry-out box. Whenever you stop to eat something, think about only eating half. Whenever you are reading a menu, always look for the option of half portions. What better way of cutting calories than by actually cutting your food in half?

Drink More Water

Not only is water important for staying properly hydrated, it can be a deterrent for excess snacking. Plus, opting for water when you would typically order juice or a soda is another method of cutting calories. Water has numerous health benefits for your body, so it would be wise to always carry a refillable bottle wherever you go to help you cut calories.

Don't Skip Meals

One of the worst things about skipping meals is the fact that you feel compelled to eat more at your next meal. While skipping meals sounds like a potential way of cutting calories, the nutritional drawbacks of allowing yourself to starve outweigh the potential of minimizing your caloric intake. Now, if you can skip a meal without binging the next time you eat, it might be worth skipping a meal or two; just make sure not to make a habit of it.

Eat Less, but Frequently

The effects of skipping meals can be easily avoided while still cutting calories if you eat smaller, but more frequent, meals. Instead of the standard three meals per day, try eating five meals. This will prevent you from ever feeling hungry, while allowing you to minimize the amount of calories consumed.

Never Eat Till You Feel Full

People will often eat to the point of feeling completely stuffed. If you are trying to cut calories, then your goal for every meal would be to stave off hunger while avoiding food consumption to feel full. In other words, just eat till you are no longer hungry then stop. Eating for the sake of feeling full is just as bad as polishing off a large plate of food.

Eat Lean Protein

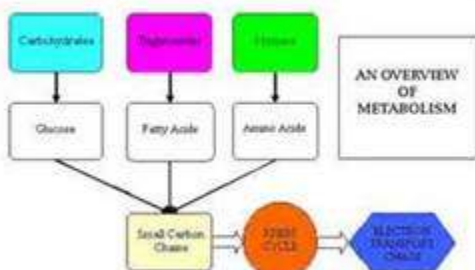
Lean protein like chicken breast and fish is a great food for cutting calories. Eating more lean protein and less complex carbs like breads, white rice and potatoes will limit your calories because it will help you feel fuller faster and for longer periods of time. Lean proteins can also be effectively used for building more muscle, which can help boost metabolism and help you lose even more weight.

Bottom Line

Cutting calories is one of the healthiest and easiest ways to lose weight. You should aim for cutting about 200 calories each day then gradually increase your calorie cutting to 500 calories each day. By minimizing your diet by 500 calories, you are still getting enough food to avoid starvation while decreasing caloric intake to lose weight.

The Link between Metabolism and Your Weight

Most people have heard of the process of metabolism, but they may not understand exactly what it is and how it may relate to weight. Through the process of metabolism, calories are converted into energy, which the body uses to function properly. When a person takes in more calories than are needed or used, the excess calories are converted to fat, and weight gain occurs. How fast the body uses or burns those calories is based on a person's individual metabolic rate. The process of metabolism is the same for everyone, but the speed or rate a person converts food to energy varies.



What Is Metabolism?

To simplify how it works, metabolism is an involuntary process, which takes place in the cells of the body to convert food into energy. A certain amount of calories are needed just to sustain the vital functions in the body, such as maintaining proper hormone levels, breathing and repairing cells. That basic level of energy needed is referred to as basal metabolic rate. Different factors affect how fast a person's basal metabolic rate will be. Some factors can be changed, while others are uncontrollable.

There are two phases or parts of metabolism, including anabolism and catabolism. During anabolism, the body takes smaller, less complex molecules and converts them into larger molecules. During anabolism, energy is stored in cells for use in the future. During catabolism, fats, proteins and carbohydrates are broken down and used for energy immediately.

Factors Affecting Metabolism

There are several factors that can affect metabolism. Some are uncontrollable, while others can be controlled. Certain factors that cannot be controlled include:

- **Age:** As people age, their basic metabolic rate decreases, which means the body needs less calories to maintain itself. If exercise or calorie intake is not adjusted accordingly, weight can start to creep on as people get older.
- **Gender:** Women tend to have a slower metabolism, since they usually have less lean muscle.
- **Genetics:** To some extent, a person's metabolic rate is inherited through his or her genes.

Additional factors that affect metabolism, but are controllable include the following:

- **Diet:** Eating too few calories can actually cause metabolism to slow. Deficiencies in the diet may also lead to problems with the endocrine system and cause metabolic disturbances.
- **Exercise:** Regular exercise can teach the body to burn calories at a faster rate. Exercise can help build muscle mass, which also increases metabolism.

The Weight and Metabolism Connection

Weight and metabolism are directly connected in a few ways. When metabolism is slower, the body needs fewer calories to sustain itself. Therefore, if there is no decrease in food intake as the body's metabolism begins to slow-down, weight gain will occur. Inversely, if the metabolism becomes faster, but there is no change in food intake, or food intake decreases, a person will lose weight.

It is also important to remember that the rate at which a person's body converts the calories in food into energy varies individually, and not everyone has the same calorie needs. In addition, an individual's metabolic rate can change over time.

Metabolic Disorders and Weight Gain



Hormones, which are produced through the endocrine system, play a large role in the regulation of metabolism. In particular, the thyroid gland produces hormones, which affect the rate in which metabolism takes place. There are certain disorders of the thyroid gland which affect and lead to unintentional weight gain or loss. Two of the most common disorders are hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism.

Hyperthyroidism occurs when excess thyroid hormones are released into the body, due to an overactive thyroid gland. These hormones cause metabolism to speed up, which may lead to weight loss. Hypothyroidism is the opposite condition

and develops when the thyroid gland is inactive. Too few hormones are released into the body and metabolism slows down, which can result in weight gain.

Ways to Increase Metabolism

Although some factors, which contribute to metabolism, cannot be controlled, there are a few things which can be done to increase metabolism and possibly increase a person's ability to lose weight.

- **Make sure to eat enough.** Eating too few calories and restricting diet too much can have an impact on your weight. What happens is, the body reacts to fewer calories by believing it is being starved, so it slows metabolism down. However, eating small, frequent meals may be a little boost for the metabolism. Every time a person eats, the body needs to use energy to digest the food.
- **Don't skip breakfast.** According to Penn State University, metabolism slows down during sleep. The morning meal helps get the metabolism revved up.
- **Exercise regularly including strength training.** Increasing lean muscle mass may increase metabolism to some extent. As lean muscle is increased in the body, calories are used at a faster rate.
- **Take supplements.** Certain vitamins and supplements, such as green tea extract and vitamin B may boost metabolic rate.

While it is clear a person's metabolic rate may play a role in weight management, it is not the only factor that should be looked at, according to The Mayo Clinic. Eating unhealthy, fatty foods, overeating and living a sedentary lifestyle all contribute to weight gain and are usually more to blame than a slow metabolism. Still, it's important to understand the role metabolism can play in weight management. With proper knowledge, certain changes can be made to increase metabolism, which can help in reaching weight loss goals.

Benefits of Eating Breakfast

The literal meaning of the word "breakfast," is to break the fast between dinner and the meal eaten after a person wakes up the next morning. If you think about the amount of time spanning between dinner and breakfast, the meaning of the word is very fitting. For most people, it can be up to 12 hours since their last meal, and yet they are quick to skip it as they rush out the door.



Energy Boost to Start the Day

Everyone should start their day off right by eating as many vitamins and other nutrients as possible. The great thing about breakfast is there are so many common breakfast foods that can be considered super-foods because of their nutrition value:

- **Eggs:** Including an egg or two for breakfast may require a few extra minutes of preparation time, but the potential health benefits make them worth cooking and eating. Not only are eggs packed with protein and amino acids, they are also one of the few, significant sources of vitamin D, which is important for absorbing calcium for stronger bones.

- **Whole grains:** Whether you are taking them in the form of bread, cereal or oatmeal; breakfast is one of the best times to enjoy whole grains in your meal. This super-food is a great source of fiber, which is essential for a healthy heart and digestive tract, and can help reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer and diabetes.
- **Vitamin C:** You can hit your daily intake of vitamin C in your very first meal of the day, whether it's in the form of a juice or solid fruit. Oranges, grapefruits and apples are common fruits on the breakfast table.

Sharper Focus

Whether you are in class or on the job, the last thing you want on your mind is food, because once the thought of a hearty bowl of cereal with a side of fruit yogurt enters your brain, there is no use trying to focus on anything else. By eating breakfast every morning, you are able to be more focused and productive until it's time to refuel at lunch. But when you skip out on breakfast, it's hard not to think about anything except food, especially with a noisy stomach that needs to be fed.

Breakfast Helps Reduce Morning Crankiness

Feeling cranky during the morning is understandable - you probably wanted to stay in bed for a few extra winks, you don't feel like going to work, and what most people forget, you're starving! Imagine going without food for 8 to 12 hours during the day; you probably won't be the most approachable person in the office or classroom. Do yourself, your classmates and your co-workers a favor by eating breakfast to help you deal with any morning moodiness and stress.

Metabolism Boost

When you sleep, your metabolism tends to slow down. The only way to jump start your metabolism for the day is to start off right with a healthy breakfast. This will allow your body to start burning through calories from the very beginning of the day, rather than in the middle of it after you've eaten lunch.

Prevents Starvation

When you're asleep, your body isn't burning as many calories. If you delay your first meal of the day till lunch, your body goes into survival mode and starts storing calories, creating fat. Do yourself a favor and take the time to have breakfast so your body doesn't think you're starving and needlessly store calories.

Keeps You from Overeating

If you prolong the amount of time between dinner and your next meal of the day, it's only natural that you end up eating more than you should. The hunger pangs and the thought of food all morning will only cause you to gorge at lunch, eating extra calories that can lead to obesity and other health complications.

Allows You to Properly Portion Your Meals

You may not feel very hungry when you initially wake up, but eating a healthy, balanced breakfast can help you plan and portion out your meals for the rest of the day. That way, you won't be tempted to binge eat or snack unnecessarily, both of which are unhealthy habits that can lead you to ignore your nutrition by satisfying hunger cravings with fatty foods anytime you like.

Helps Lower the "Bad" Cholesterol

Eating breakfast every morning can help lower LDL cholesterol, also known as the "bad" cholesterol. When you skip breakfast, you are creating a chain reaction within your body:

- First, you slow down your metabolism.
- Second, fat is stored longer in your body.
- Third, you have a higher tendency to overeat at your next meal.
- Fourth, you gain weight and your LDL cholesterol goes up.

Breakfast Can Be Nutritious and Delicious

Don't let a shortage of time keep you from enjoying a bite to eat upon waking up. Start the day off with a healthy and delicious meal. You can even indulge a bit with some crispy bacon, sausage links or pancakes. Just make sure to have something with a high nutritional value on the side like a slice of cantaloupe or a bowl of fresh strawberries.

Eat Breakfast to Lose Weight

One of the greatest benefits of eating breakfast every morning is you can lose weight by doing so. Just from reading the previous health benefits, you can see how you're helping your body stay lean. Numerous studies have also shown that an increase in weight is commonly associated with skipping breakfast. The best part is, even if you eat too much or have something a little unhealthy, you still have the entire day to make up for it. Eating breakfast every morning is one of the easiest ways to lose weight and eat healthier.

How to Kick-Start Your Metabolism

Boosting your metabolism is one of the easiest ways to stay fit or lose weight. A person's metabolism is a system of chemical reactions in the body that is used to breakdown food into energy. This energy that metabolism creates is used from almost all of the body's functions, from moving to thinking. Your metabolism can begin to slow with age, which people might notice as they begin to pack on the pounds, even though they've maintained the same diet and lifestyle for years.



Gain More Muscle

While you don't necessarily have to bulk-up like you're some sort of body builder, putting on a little more muscle mass is a great way to give your metabolism a jolt once it's become sluggish. Having more muscle requires your body to burn calories just to sustain that muscle, even when you're not doing anything. Numerous studies have shown that those who have more muscle mass have a higher metabolic rate than those with less muscle.

Increase Water Intake

If you are gaining insufficient amounts of water, you need to start hydrating yourself properly. Dehydration is one of the factors that can slow down a person's metabolism, since water is very important for the body to burn calories. While it's important to drink plenty of water to kick-start a slowing metabolism, it is also important not to overhydrate to avoid water-intoxication.

Eat Breakfast

If you want to kick-start that metabolism, you need to kick-start your day by eating a healthy breakfast. There are numerous benefits to eating breakfast every morning, one of which includes a boost in metabolism. Upon waking, most people have gone about 10 to 12 hours without any food. To skip breakfast means you would be starving yourself for a longer period of time, causing your body to go into "survival mode," storing fat in the process. This will slow down your metabolism.

Stop Starving Yourself

Many people believe that starving yourself will help with losing weight. This major nutrition mistake can actually have the opposite effects of weight reduction. As explained earlier, skipping meals can cause your body to store fat and slow your metabolism. You also run the risk of binge eating to satisfy yourself after going without food for an extended period of time.

Eat Smaller and Eat Frequently

Try eating smaller portions, but more frequently so you don't feel like you're starving. Constantly snacking on small, healthy foods will help keep your metabolism going, increasing its overall effectiveness. This method of eating will also keep you full, allowing you to control your calories and prevent overeating. This is a great way to eat healthier and give your metabolism the boost it needs to burn fat.

Get Active

While weight training to build muscle is important for boosting your metabolism, it is also important to stay active. You can do this by either adding more cardio workouts to your week through outdoor exercises, aerobics, running, swimming or just being more active at your cubicle or around the house. That means no being a couch-potato.

Steer Clear of Crash Diets

Crash diets can be very effective at shedding pounds in a short amount of time, but they can be disastrous for your metabolism. For one thing, most crash diets cause you to starve yourself through calorie deprivation, which means your metabolism will slow down. Secondly, crash diets deprive you of the necessary nutrients to maintain muscle. This reduction in muscle mass can also slow down your metabolism.

Do Your Own Cooking

Cooking your own food and cooking in a healthier manner not only keeps you active, but also gives you more control of your meals. The effort it takes to cook a healthy, wholesome meal is a lot better for your metabolism than going to a restaurant or fast-food establishment. Try to cook for yourself as much as possible to increase your metabolism.

Be Fidgety

Standing or sitting completely still for extended periods of time while at your desk or on the couch will slow down your metabolism. Try making a habit of keeping your body constantly moving by either tapping your feet, constantly stretching or constantly moving your legs and being fidgety. Constant movement will keep your metabolism cranked, plus you're burning calories, even if it's only a small amount.

Reduce Stress

An increased level of stress can slow down your metabolism by creating a hormonal imbalance in your body. Increased levels of stress can strain numerous parts of your body, and can increase a person's tendency to overeat for stress relief.

Healthy Ways to Gain Weight and Muscle



The emphasis of weight is usually on how to lose it rather than how to gain it. This may seem like a funny joke to those who have a serious problem losing weight, but the opposite also can be just as serious.

For some people, especially men around the ages of 15-to-23, the inability to gain weight and muscle mass can be a problem when they're attempting to acquire the ideal muscular figure. This seems like a no-brainer for most, and the answer is just to eat more and lift weights. The problem is that just eating more is not always the healthiest and effective way to gain weight. The point should be to gain weight properly and still maintain healthy eating habits.

Reasons For Lack Of Weight Gain

There are specific reasons that people have trouble gaining weight. Before you learn how to properly gain weight, it's important to know the reasons why you're experiencing problems gaining size in the first place.

Fast Metabolism

Every living thing has a metabolism. To put it simply, it is the process by which food is turned into energy. The faster this is done, the faster calories are burned. This means that someone with a fast metabolism can eat plenty of food and still lose weight with minimal to no exercise. This can cause a person with a fast metabolism to naturally lose weight and have trouble gaining it. A fast metabolism is more common amongst younger people. Generally speaking, the younger you are, the faster your metabolism works.

Active Lifestyle

Genetics is not the only reason why people may have trouble gaining weight; another may be the type of lifestyle they live. How active you are on a daily basis can mean that you are constantly burning calories. This constant burning of calories can cause weight-loss as well as make a person have trouble gaining weight. This is common for athletes who play sports constantly throughout the year.

Practices five days a week with at least two hours of constant physical activity, like running or swimming, can make it difficult to gain weight. There are also some people who are constantly moving because of their job, or they just enjoy moving around a lot. These people will burn extra calories and will sometimes prevent themselves from gaining weight.

Poor Diet

When there is a problem with gaining weight compounded with a poor diet, it can only make things worse. Proper nutrition is very important to gain the proper type of weight. The right type of proteins, carbohydrates and healthy fats need to be added to your diet in order to gain muscle. Simply put, eating fatty foods after a workout will either hinder or create other, more hazardous problems further down the road.

Healthy Ways to Gain Weight

If you're trying to get bigger and increase your muscle mass, there are correct ways to gain weight, which involves proper dieting and the right types of exercises. Now that you have a better understanding as to why you might be having trouble gaining weight, here is the proper way you should look towards getting bigger.



Weight Lifting

Weight lifting is the best and most effective way of properly gaining weight and muscle mass. It does take a lot of hard work and it's not as easy as just picking up some loose dumbbells and lifting them. If you are serious about gaining weight, then a workout plan needs to be tailored to fit your needs.

A simple rule of thumb to building muscle mass is to stay between 6-to-12 repetitions and lift heavy weight. Some people may hit the gym and lift weight they can handle at 12 plus repetitions per set. This type of lifting will get you stronger, but it will not get you bigger over time. Staying between 6-to-12 repetitions will build muscle; the only disclaimer is to make sure that you are switching exercises and increasing weight to confuse your muscles. The effect of this will cause your muscles to continue building therefore creating more muscle mass.

Nutrition

The correct food needs to be eaten during this time in order for the right type of weight to be put on. The common mistake is to think that you can eat anything you want in order to gain weight, and that food will be burned and turned into muscle. This is the wrong approach to take because instead of lean muscle, fat will be gained. The correct foods to target are calorie dense foods that provide a proper amount of nutrients. Examples of these foods are:

- Chicken
- Potatoes
- Oatmeal
- Brown rice
- Whole grain foods
- Nuts
- Fish
- Fruit

Supplements

There are many supplements on the market that aid in gaining weight. You do need to exercise a little bit of caution when searching for these products. Before you buy any product, make sure to research as much as you can to ensure that you are buying something safe. The most common supplements that are available are protein powders. It's important to put the right nutrients in your body at least 30 minutes after your workout. During this time the body is looking for protein in order to build muscle, if your body does not have enough protein then it will not build muscle. The time immediately after a workout is when your body is looking to replenish its protein supply therefore a protein shake can help with this process and aid in creating muscle.

Dietary Fats: Separating the Bad from the Good

For years, eating a low fat diet has been touted as being essential to losing weight and controlling or preventing cardiovascular disease. However, recent research shows that it's not simply how much fat you eat, but rather what type of fat. It appears that not all fats are created equal when it comes to maintaining a healthy diet. Read on to learn more about the different types of dietary fats.



There are four major types of fat and each of them differs based on their chemical structure and effects on your health. Eating too much of the "bad" fats (saturated and Trans fats) may increase the risk for certain diseases, while eating the "good" fats (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats) may actually lower disease risk. The key to a healthy diet is to eat more of the good fats, minimize saturated fats and to avoid Trans fats.

The "Bad" Fats

There are two main types of dietary fats that have been shown to have a detrimental effect on your health. These include:

- **Saturated Fats:** This type of fat is mainly derived from meat and dairy products. Eating foods rich in saturated fats have been shown to increase LDL cholesterol as well increase your risk for cardiovascular disease and Type 2 diabetes. Foods with saturated fat include animal products such as red meat, poultry, pork, seafood, eggs, milk, lard and butter. Coconut and palm oils also contain saturated fat. The American Heart Association (AHA) suggests that no more than 7-percent of your total calories should come from saturated fats.



- **Trans Fats:** The majority of Trans fats in your diet are created artificially by a chemical process called partial hydrogenation that occurs during the manufacturing of many foods. Trans fats help to extend the shelf life of food, provide a less greasy feel, and create a pleasing creamy texture. Many commercial baked goods (crackers, cookies and cakes) and fried foods (doughnuts and fries) are rich in Trans fats. Furthermore, foods that list "partially hydrogenated



oils" on their ingredient list also contain Trans fats. Trans fats are thought to be the worst type of fat as it simultaneously increases LDL cholesterol and decreases HDL cholesterol. The AHA recommends limiting the amount of Trans fats you eat to less than 1-percent of your total daily calories.

The "Good" Fats

Unsaturated dietary fats, when eaten in moderation, have been shown to have a beneficial effect on overall health. There are two main types of unsaturated fats. These include:

- **Monounsaturated Fats:** Eating foods rich in monounsaturated fats have been shown to reduce LDL cholesterol, lowering your risk of heart disease and stroke. Additionally, consumption of monounsaturated fats has also been associated with improved insulin and blood sugar levels. Foods high in monounsaturated fats include vegetable oils such as olive oil, canola, oil and sesame oil. Other sources of these fats include avocados, peanut butter, and a variety of nuts.



- **Polyunsaturated Fats:** Evidence shows that eating foods rich in polyunsaturated fats improves blood cholesterol levels, which can decrease your risk of heart disease. Polyunsaturated fats may also help decrease the risk of type 2 diabetes. Polyunsaturated fats also encompass essential fats, which are fats that your body requires to function properly but can't produce. Therefore, these essential fats, specifically omega-6 and omega-3 fats must be procured through your diet. Omega-6 and omega-3 fats are essential to maintaining cognitive function and for the overall growth and development of the body. Furthermore, the consumption of omega 3 fats has been shown to decrease your risk of coronary heart disease, depression, and arrhythmias. Foods high in polyunsaturated fat include a number of vegetable oils, including soybean oil, corn oil and safflower oil, as well as fatty fish such as salmon, mackerel, herring and trout. Other sources include some nuts and seeds such as walnuts and sunflower seeds.



Although there is no recommended guideline for how much unsaturated fats you should eat, the AHA suggests that a majority of your fat intake (which should not exceed 25-to-35 percent) should be derived from unsaturated fats.

Calculating Your Recommended Daily Fat Intake

The AHA recommends that no more than 7-percent of your daily calories should come from saturated fat. In order to calculate how many calories per day this translates to, multiply your daily caloric intake by 7-percent and divide that by nine (the number of calories in a gram of fat). For a 2000 calories per day diet, 140 calories (which is equivalent to about 16 grams of saturated fat) should come from saturated fat.

The Bottom Line

The American Heart Association suggests that your daily fat intake should not exceed 35-percent of your total calories. Furthermore, most of these calories should be derived from the "good" fats specifically monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. Conversely, saturated and Trans fats should not exceed more than 7-percent and 1-percent, respectively, of your daily caloric intake.

Healthy Restaurant Eating

Eating healthy at home is quite simple when you're in complete control of the dinner menu and the ingredients used in your food. However, healthy restaurant eating is a whole other story. Limited food options and deliciously enticing menu entrees might cause you to completely throw your diet plan out the window. For most people who are trying to lose weight, this means that dining out is completely out of the question. If your diet is preventing you from enjoying the pleasures of dining out, you're only giving yourself another reason to quit.



Skip the Bread

Many restaurants offer complimentary bread before taking your order. The first step for avoiding excess calories and ruining your diet at a restaurant is to pass on the bread. Do whatever you can to avoid the temptation of reaching over the table for a fresh roll or baked biscuit. You can even tell the waiter not to bring you the bread basket, although the people you're dining with might be a little upset about missing on the complimentary breadsticks.

Get a Healthy Beverage

One of the biggest nutrition mistakes people make is drinking their calories in the form of alcohol, juice or sodas. Your healthiest option for a beverage when dining out is a glass of water. If this is a little too boring for you, opt for a slice of lemon in your water, or get sparkling water. If you must order something with a little flavor, stick to unsweetened iced tea or diet soda.

Avoid Appetizers

Unless you plan on having an appetizer as your main dish, you should definitely skip it. The fried calamari or artichoke and spinach dip all sound great before a meal, but you're just double-dipping on the calories. Healthy restaurant eating can be accomplished as long as you focus on the main meal at hand, and avoid the extra chances at eating one too many calories.

Opt for the Salad to Get Full

Many establishments offer a soup or salad option to go with your meal. If this is the case, you should always opt for the salad. All too often the soups available for choosing are loaded with sodium and excess calories, plus, they don't get you full. Select a salad with a light dressing to help you get a little fuller before your meal even arrives at the table.

Here are a few more salad tips:

- Ask for the dressing on the side.
- Instead of drenching your salad with dressing, dip your fork in the dressing before plunging it into your salad to avoid excess calories.

Choose Veggie Sides that are Non-starchy

Practically all restaurant entrées come with at least one side dish. This can be very damaging to your diet, especially since most side dishes come with the option for something starchy like fries or mashed potatoes. The good news is they also tend to come with a healthy vegetable option like steamed broccoli and carrots. Always opt for the veggies and try eating them all before you attack the main entrée so that you will get full on the healthy sides. By the way, coleslaw and deep fried vegetables do not count as healthy options.

Ask for Half the Entrée Only

An easy way to cut your calories in half when dining out is to ask the waiter to only serve half of your entrée and to put the other half in a takeout box. Most restaurants serve up heavy helpings to patrons. These massive servings are typically more than you would normally eat at home if you were cooking for yourself, especially while you're on a diet.

Order Lean Protein Dishes

Ordering a dish mainly made up of lean proteins like a salmon filet or a piece of grilled chicken breast are great options at a restaurant. They are healthy alternatives to most other menu items, and the protein will make you full very quickly.

Avoid Heavy, Complex Carb Dishes

A giant pasta plate or a heavy sandwich might sound healthy when they come with vegetables, but the complex carbs can be a disaster for your diet plan. If you're in the mood for a sandwich, try locating a lettuce wrap on the menu. As far as pasta goes, only order it if you have the option for whole wheat noodles.

Look for the Healthy Options Section

Most establishments have become well aware that people are trying to eat healthier and have included healthy entrée options on their menus. Some even have entire sections dedicated to the health conscientious. Plus, most of these sections come with nutritional information that includes the amount of calories and fat in each dish to help you keep track of your diet.

Have a Healthy Dessert

It's ok to indulge once in a while when you are on a diet. A healthy dessert is a great way to celebrate a week of dieting, and can be looked at as a nice reward to **motivate you to exercise**. Always look for healthy options on the menu like dishes made with dark chocolate or light sorbets or frozen yogurt, which are healthier than regular ice cream.

Reducing Calories to Lose Weight

Although there are many types of diets, losing weight simply comes down to eating fewer calories than your body needs. When people burn more calories than they eat, the body uses stored fat for energy, which leads to weight-loss.

- **Watch for hidden calories:** Calories that a person may not take into consideration include cream in coffee, butter, mayonnaise on a sandwich and salad dressing.
- **Limit calories from beverages:** Soda and fruit juice both contain a lot of sugar and calories. Consider limiting both and switching to water.
- **Order food grilled instead of fried:** Fried foods usually have more calories than foods that have been grilled or baked. Also, skip food that has been prepared in cream or butter sauces, which can add a lot of extra calories.
- **Read food labels:** Most food packages have food labels, which list the amount of calories, fat content and grams of protein and carbohydrates.

Calorie counting may be recommended for losing weight, but it is also important to understand the types of calories that should be eaten. While calories from essential fats, carbohydrates and protein are needed, empty calories with no nutritional value are not. Making the right food choices and balancing caloric needs takes a little practice, but it is essential for weight management.

How to Read a Nutrition Label

When shopping for food or beverages, labels like "Reduced Fat!" or "Calcium Enriched!" are commonly seen. Manufacturers will do anything to entice shoppers to buy their product, and foods that give off the impression that they are healthy are just as attractive as bargain foods, especially when they offer great health benefits without sacrificing anything in taste. For example, think of a bag of chocolate-chip, oatmeal cookies with front labels claiming they are low fat, and a significant source of whole-grains. Those words just jump out at consumers, causing them to buy the product without really looking up the nutrition facts.

Luckily, a nutrition facts label is required on most packaged foods in many countries throughout the world. This helps consumers get the nutrition information they really need before eating or drinking a certain product. By reading and understanding the nutrition facts label, consumers can select the most nutritional products, while avoiding the health risks associated with unhealthy food products. The problem is, most people either don't know how to read nutrition facts labels, or don't bother reading them at all. Why read a nutrition label when the front of the packaging already claims the product has 75 percent less fat? Well, a quick lesson on how to read nutrition labels might make you think twice about eating something just because it makes you think it is a healthy food option.

Serving Size

The most common mistake people make when reading nutrition labels is ignoring the serving size. The nutrition information provided on the nutrition label is influenced by the serving size, and below the serving size information is the amount of servings per container. If a nutrition label states a bag of chips has 100 calories, that number is in relation to a "per serving" basis. If the servings per container are 10 servings, the calorie content for the entire bag of

chips is actually 1000 calories.

Calories

The next thing people will notice on a nutrition label is the calorie content. Nutrition labels also show how much of the total calories per serving are obtained from fat. Don't be alarmed by the two calorie readings on the nutrition label, they are not meant to be added together to get the total calorie content. Do be alarmed by the amount of calories one serving may contain if the calorie reading on the nutrition label is high. A chocolate bar may only have 100 calories per serving, but there may be four servings per bar. That means you are actually consuming 400 calories if you decide to eat the entire chocolate bar. Keeping track of the calorie content in your foods will help you avoid eating too many calories in one day. Maintaining a healthy calorie intake everyday will lower the risk of obesity and other health problems.

Nutrients

Following the calorie information on the nutrition label is the amount of nutrients per serving. The Food and Drug Administration suggests limiting the first three nutrients typically seen on nutrition labels which are fat, cholesterol and sodium. According to the FDA, these nutrients are either overeaten, or eaten in adequate amounts, and too much of these particular nutrients can lead to chronic diseases. The nutrients listed in the lower portion of the nutrition label, like vitamins, iron and calcium, are nutrients that most people don't get enough of. According to the FDA, eating adequate amounts of these nutrients can improve your health and reduce the risk of certain diseases and conditions. The amount of protein and carbohydrates needed to maintain a healthy diet vary from person to person.

Daily Values

Beside each listed nutrient is a daily value (DV) percentage. This percentage is almost always based off of a 2,000 calorie daily diet. Knowing the amount of nutrients you need to consume in grams per day, then calculating the amount of nutrients a food contains in grams per serving can be quite difficult. The percentage number beside each nutrient provides a much easier method of tracking the amount of nutrients being consumed each day. For example, if you kept track of the DV percentage of all the nutrients in all the servings of different foods you consumed in one day, you can find out how close you are to the recommended daily allowance for a 2,000 calorie diet. If your DV percentage totals equate to 116 percent total fat consumed for the day, and 60 percent calcium, that means you ate 16 percent over the daily allowance for fat, and were 40 percent shy of the recommended intake for calcium.

Nutrition Label Tips

The DV percentage enables you to make comparisons between different brands of the same type of food, just remember that the serving sizes used for the nutrition facts need to be the same or similar for an accurate comparison. The DV percentage will also allow you to verify the front label claims of a particular food. For example, you can check to see if a brand of cereal really is calcium enriched when compared to the standard form of the same cereal, or better yet, compare it to another brand of cereal to see which would benefit you more in calcium content.

Don't forget to read all the way to the bottom of the nutrition label. Ingredients are usually listed below the nutrition label, and can help you determine if a certain food you eat contains anything considered unhealthy. Also read the footnote on certain food labels. This

footnote typically states that DV's are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. The footnote sometimes contains a table that lists the suggested daily allowance for certain nutrients.

The Mediterranean Diet for Weight Loss and Better Health

Looking for a healthy diet that's proven to work? Consider the Mediterranean diet, which has basically been in use in several parts of Europe for centuries. This diet is packed with healthy fats to help you get lean and fit. Plus, it has tons of great health benefits beyond weight loss.

Why it's Healthy

The Mediterranean diet enjoys a rich history that extends back thousands of years. The diet is based on what residents of the Mediterranean coastal region generally eat. Naturally, this means the diet reflects foods that are naturally available in that location and climate. When researchers realized that people living in the Mediterranean region tend to live very long lives and have a relatively low incidence of chronic disease, they took notice. Years and years of research has continued to prove that the Mediterranean diet provides a wealth of health benefits that helps people to live longer, disease-free lives. This is thanks to the fact that the diet includes lots of healthy fats, vitamins and minerals condensed into satisfying and filling foods.



It's worth noting that people in this area of the world also tend to get plenty of regular exercise, which helps them to keep a weight and avoid many chronic diseases and conditions. Therefore, this diet can lead to weight loss and the maintenance of a healthy weight when combined with adequate physical activity.

What to Eat on a Mediterranean Diet

The Mediterranean diet consists of lots of delicious and flavorful foods that make it a fairly easy diet to follow. The basis for the diet consists of several key items, each of which can be consumed daily since they are the foundation for the diet:

- **Whole grains:** Breads, pastas and rice are all key components of the Mediterranean diet. These should be composed of whole grains rather than grains that have been refined, a process which causes the grains to lose much of their nutritional value. The whole grains are an excellent source of fiber, vitamins and minerals.
- **Fruits and vegetables:** Fruits and vegetables should be a part of every meal since they are low in fat and sodium while being chock full of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants.
- **Olive oil:** If you plan to follow this diet, stock up on extra virgin olive oil. It's a healthy, monosaturated fat that is better for you than butter or margarine, so use it for cooking, dressing, etc.
- **Beans, nuts and seeds:** These plant-based foods are key to a Mediterranean diet because they provide protein and healthy omega-3 fatty acids to your diet.
- **Herbs and spices:** Instead of adding salt to your foods, use fresh herbs and spices to provide flavor.

In addition to these basic items, there are several other components of the traditional Mediterranean diet. The following items are included in the diet but should not be eaten as regularly or in as great amount as the foods mentioned above:

- **Fish and seafood:** Since this diet plan is based on the eating habits of a coastal region, it's no surprise that fish and seafood are key food items in this diet. Fish and seafood provide much of the protein your body needs while keeping away unhealthy fats and should be eaten at least twice a week.
- **Poultry:** Poultry is another healthy protein source in the Mediterranean diet that should be eaten at least twice a week.
- **Eggs:** Although a good protein source, those eating a Mediterranean diet should limit their intake of eggs to about once a week.
- **Low-fat dairy:** Dairy products are included, but only when low in fat. Choose fat-free or low-fat milk, cheeses and yogurts, and only use these as small sides or additions to your meal.

Finally, here are a few things to eat very sparingly when on a Mediterranean diet:

- **Red meat:** Limit your intake of red meat to just a few times a month since there can be many unhealthy fats in this protein source.
- **Red wine:** Drink wine in moderation, which means no more than a glass per day for women and two glasses per day for men.
- **Sweets:** It goes without saying that you shouldn't eat lots of sweets, but the Mediterranean does allow for the occasional, small splurge on something sweet.

Weight Loss

Several studies have shown that a Mediterranean diet can produce weight loss results. In fact, it's been shown to have better weight loss results than a low-fat diet in some studies. Simply eating healthy foods like whole grains, nuts, beans, fruits and veggies isn't enough to lose more than a few pounds for most people, however. It's important to remember that you will only get significant weight loss results if you combine this diet with regular exercise. Make sure you are getting some kind of physical activity every day, and try to work out at least a few days a week for the best results.

Other Health Benefits

In addition to helping you to lose weight, the Mediterranean diet provides a host of amazing health benefits, including a reduced risk of diabetes, heart disease, Alzheimer's disease and other chronic diseases. In addition, many people on this diet have lower blood pressure and lower cholesterol levels.

Weight Loss Plan

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The following program should help you lose 1-4 pounds per week. We are giving you ideas. Feel free to substitute similar foods for those we have listed if you choose. Be sure that if you substitute that the sodium, fat, carbs, and protein are similar.

Remember that exercise is very important. Your exercise can be anything from walking 15 minutes per day to Zumba 3 times per week. It's up to you what gives you the most pleasure.

Day 1

Breakfast:

Cereal – 1 cup Raisin Bran
1 cup low fat milk
1 egg
1 slice Canadian bacon
1 apple

Snack:

1 banana

Lunch

1 cup vegetable soup
1 salad
1 whole wheat tortilla
2 oz turkey
1 low fat cheese triangle

Snack:

1 apple

Dinner:

1 Salmon fish filet
Salad
Steamed broccoli
Rice

Snack:

Apple with low fat cheese triangle

Day 2

Breakfast:

1 egg
1 slice Canadian bacon
1 cup cereal with low fat milk

Lunch:

1 whole wheat tortilla
2 oz turkey
1 cup low fat cream cheese
1 cup garden soup

Snack:

Apple with low fat cheese triangle

Dinner:

Lasagna
Salad

Day 3

Breakfast: (make yourself a homemade egg McMuffin with the items below)

1 egg
1 12-grain low fat muffin
1 slice low fat cheese
1 slice Canadian bacon

1 apple

Lunch:

Lasagna
Carrot and celery sticks
Beef Jerky
Sunflower Seeds

Dinner:

1 12-grain low fat muffin
1 sirloin steak
Salad

Day 4

Breakfast: (make yourself a homemade egg McMuffin with the items below)

1 low fat 12-grain muffin
1 egg
1 slice Canadian bacon

1 banana

½ apple

Lunch:

1 banana
1 whole wheat tortilla
2 oz turkey
1 triangle low fat cheese
1 hamburger on a bun without sauce

Dinner:

Salad
1 cup spaghetti with marinara sauce

Snack:

Banana with peanut butter

Day 5

Breakfast:

1 cup granola with low fat milk
1 egg
1 slice Canadian bacon

Snack:

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup cottage cheese
1 banana
1 apple

Lunch:

Huge salad with tuna

Snack:

1 12-grain muffin
1 triangle low fat cheese

Dinner:

Chinese food of your choice

Day 6

Breakfast:

1 low fat muffin with Smart Balance
1 cup low fat cottage cheese

Lunch:

Leftover Chinese food
Apple

Snack:

$\frac{1}{2}$ sandwich wrap
1 slice zucchini bread

Dinner:

1 sirloin tip steak
1 salad
 $\frac{1}{2}$ sweet potato

Day 7

Breakfast:

2 eggs
1 slice Canadian bacon
½ apple
½ 12-grain muffin

Snack:

Bag pretzel thins
Apple with low fat cheese triangle

Lunch:

1 whole wheat tortilla
2 oz turkey
1 triangle low fat cheese
Lettuce

Snack

½ cup ricotta cheese on ½ 12-grain muffin (heat in microwave with cinnamon)

Dinner:

2 cups lentil soup
½ slice 12-grain muffin

Snack:

1 cup cottage cheese with cherry tomatoes

Day 8

Breakfast:

1 egg
1 slice Canadian bacon
1 slice whole grain bread
1 slice low fat cheese
1 banana
1 cup Raisin Bran with nonfat milk

Lunch:

1 salad
1 bowl of lentil soup

Snack

1 apple
1 low fat cheese triangle
2 oz roast beef

Dinner:

Salad
Steamed Asparagus
3 slices pork roast

Day 9

Breakfast:

1 egg
2 oz roast beef
1 banana
1 apple
1 whole wheat tortilla

Lunch:

1 whole wheat tortilla
2 oz roast beef
1 triangle low fat cheese
1 cup nonfat yogurt with sliced bananas
1 cup low fat cottage cheese

Dinner:

1 slice low fat Swiss cheese
2 slices 12-grain bread
Salad
Apple
Banana

Day 10

Breakfast:

1 egg
2 oz roast beef
1 cup raisin bran cereal
1 banana
½ slice 12-grain bread

Lunch:

5 pieces of beef jerky
Togo's tuna sandwich
Arizona iced tea

Dinner:

1 cup spaghetti with meat sauce
Salad
Steamed green beans
Strawberries
Papaya

Day 11

Breakfast:

1 egg
1 slice low fat cheese
1 banana and ¼ pear
½ low fat 12-grain muffin

Lunch:

1 salad
1 low fat 12-grain muffin
2 oz roast beef
1 triangle low fat cheese

Snack

1 apple and 1 banana
1 package low fat crackers
3 TBS peanut butter

Dinner:

Salad
1 broiled chicken breast
Chinese rice

Day 12

Breakfast:

1 12-grain muffin
¼ cup ricotta cheese
Strawberries
1 cup raisin bran with nonfat milk

Snack:

1 cup cottage cheese with cherry tomatoes

Lunch:

Salad with tuna
Muffin with cheese triangle and roast beef

Dinner:

1 chicken breast
Steamed asparagus

Day 13

Breakfast:

1 cup raisin bran with nonfat milk

Snack:

1 egg

1 cup cottage cheese

Fruit and Vegetable sticks

Lunch:

1 12-grain muffin

2 oz turkey

1 triangle low fat cheese

Apple and banana

Snack

1 whole wheat tortilla

2 oz turkey

Dinner:

Small sweet potato

Small bowl of cottage cheese

Day 14

Breakfast:

1 cup of raisin bran with nonfat milk

Lunch:

1 large sweet potato

Grapes

2 oz low fat turkey

Dinner:

Garden salad

Chopped beef

If you are hungry between meals have vegetables or fruit.

If you plan to use this diet please let Brenda know. This is a good program and you can expect to lose about 1-3 pounds per week on this program. There are more weeks available if you wish.

**CERTIFIED WOMEN'S HEALTH COUNSELOR ONLINE COURSE - SESSION 14
QUESTION & ANSWERS**

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY, STATE, ZIP, PC: _____
PHONE: _____
FAX: _____
E-MAIL: _____

Please be sure to fill out the information above, complete the test and e-mail or mail it back to us at iridology@netzero.net or P.O. Box 485, Weimar, CA, 95736-0485. We will grade your question & answer session and will let you know if we have any questions or concerns. **Please use a separate sheet to do this assignment.**

1. Is there a connection between weight gain and lack of sleep?
2. How much sleep does the average person need?
3. How can you improve your sleeping?
4. Do you use portion control for your weight control? If yes, does it work and what do you do? If not, why?
5. How many household chores in this session do you work on regularly?
6. Why should you chew your food properly?
7. Why should you eat breakfast?
8. What is the difference between "good" and "bad" cholesterol?
9. How can you reduce calories to lose weight?
10. What is metabolism?