

Weight Management

Making choices that improve your overall health is one of the most important things to keep in mind no matter how much weight you want to lose. There is still overall agreement on the basics of weight loss even though there are often headline stories of new ways to drop pounds. It boils down to the fact that each of us can influence our weight by what we eat and how active we are. Many of us have very full schedules between work and home life, making it a challenge to find time for activity. We also may find it very difficult to change longstanding eating habits. So even though we all have heard that we need to choose a healthy variety of foods and be active on a daily basis, there are often some real barriers to making these changes.



Here are some ideas to help you start making some changes:

- **Start small:** break down a big goal into small steps.
- **Write out your plan in detail:** what, when, where, how?
- **Think ahead to what might get in your way:** what is an acceptable “plan B”?
- **Make your actions visible:** mark your progress on a calendar, on your refrigerator, on your bathroom mirror.
- **Ask a supportive friend** to check in with you.

Discouraged about past attempts to lose weight? Let's think outside the box.

Consider a different approach.

Have a brainstorming session and think of something you have not tried in the past. Some things that have helped others:

- working with a health coach, dietitian, personal trainer or professional counselor
- get a dog you can take on walks and chase around the park
- work on stress management
- give up on “making” yourself go to the gym and start dancing, gardening, or play a sport
- rather than saying “no sugar” - try sitting quietly, closing your eyes and thoroughly enjoying a chocolate chip cookie. It is hard to over eat when we eat consciously.
- Instead of counting calories, develop the habit of responding to your hunger & fullness signals. Eat when you are hungry and stop when you are full.

What else can you try?

Lifestyle factors may prove to be more important than the number on the scale.

There is a body of research that shows that health risks are usually associated with lifestyle behaviors, not weight. While researchers will continue to tease out the relationships between weight, lifestyle factors and health risk, there is no doubt that we all can reap health benefits by moving more, enjoying a healthy mix of foods, getting plenty of sleep and finding a good balance between the challenges and enjoyment in life. You may find that a focus beyond the scales will bring you more health and happiness.