




Registered Dietitians
Department of
Veterans Affairs
Leading the way to better health

The Basics of Weight Loss: When You're Ready

When you are ready to lose weight, here's how to get started:

- **Keep track of your journey.** Weigh yourself once each week and write it down. Keep track of everything you eat and drink for one week. What about your feelings? Write those down too!  and
- **Set realistic and specific goals.** ½ to 2 pounds each week of weight loss is reasonable-slower is fine too. Remind yourself daily of **why** you want to lose weight. Reward yourself when you reach short-term goals. Write down the specific changes you are making. For example: "I will eat ice cream once a week instead of everyday".
- **Decrease the calories you eat.** Find the extra calories in your diet and cut back on them. Skip high calorie snacks like chips, cheese, and cookies. Snack on vegetables instead. Skip soda or juice drinks and drink water instead. Cut back on high calorie foods at meals such as meat or cheesy casseroles-add more vegetables. Go easy on fast foods-eat food from home. Be consistent and you'll see results!
- **Increase the calories you use.** Add extra activity to your day, most days of the week. Check with your provider about starting an exercise program. Keep track of your activity each day-write it down!

More weight loss tips:

- ◆ Eat regularly-don't skip meals
- ◆ Drink 6-8 cups of water each day
- ◆ Increase activity a bit each day
- ◆ Get support from family and friends
- ◆ If you splurge, don't give up



Contact your local VA dietitian for more information.