

Habits for a Lifetime... Weight Management for Adults



Have you ever gone in the bookstore and looked at book titles, or looked at the cover of magazines in the supermarket? How many books or articles are about losing weight? LOTS AND LOTS...Americans are constantly trying to lose weight with the latest miracle "diet." Well, that is part of our problem. We "go on" a diet to lose weight and then "go off" the diet when we are done. Try a different and more positive approach to weight management. Adopt a healthier lifestyle.

Rather than focus on a diet to lose weight, focus on changing your eating and activity habits to improve your health and fitness. Such changes will also lead to weight loss. But viewing them as lifelong changes to improve your health and fitness may make them stick. It may not sound as easy as the latest fad. However, there is one big difference...this approach WORKS! To begin making lifestyle changes, you need to address two things... your attitude and your behavior.

Control your Goals!

NOT:

"I will lose 2 pounds this week"

BUT:

"I will only snack on fruits and vegetables this week."

OR

"I will take a brisk walk, going as far as I can 4 days this week."

Changes in Attitude

Face it! Most of us will never look like a super model or a professional athlete. Everyone has a different shape and body structure. We can't all be thin, but we can all be healthy. Strive to be the best you can be, keeping in mind that very few of us can look like the models we see in magazines. The best place to begin to change our attitude about weight is to set realistic goals. Set goals for the healthy behavior you want to lose. These goals are more specific and you have more control over your success.

Also, rethink your definition of success. The National Institutes of Health defines weight loss and maintenance success as a loss of 10% from where you start. For example, if you are 200 pounds, $200 \times .10 = 20$ pounds, then 20

pounds lost and maintained for at least 1 year would be a success.

For many, a big attitude change involves the scales. Try not following your progress on the scales. Weighing yourself can lead to feelings of failure. You can tell if you are improving your health and fitness by the way you feel. You can tell if you are losing weight by the way you look and the way your clothes fit. However, if you can't quite do without the scales, limit yourself to weighing only once a week.

For a more positive attitude, concentrate on the healthier behaviors that lead to weight loss than the weight loss itself. Different approaches work for different people. Find the tools that work for you and use them.

Changes in Behavior

Be Active! People who exercise regularly are much more likely to maintain their weight loss than those who do not. Find an activity you like, vary it from day to day, and fit it into your schedule. See the information in the "Physical Activity for Adults" handout for more suggestions.

Make Healthier Choices

- Choose whole grain breads and cereals each day.
- Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables each day.
- Choose more and larger servings of fresh fruits and vegetables each day.
- Choose skim or 1% milk and low fat or part skim cheeses.
- Choose lean meats, poultry without skin, fish, dried beans, and peas most of the time. Eat fewer and smaller servings.
- Bake, boil, broil, roast or grill.

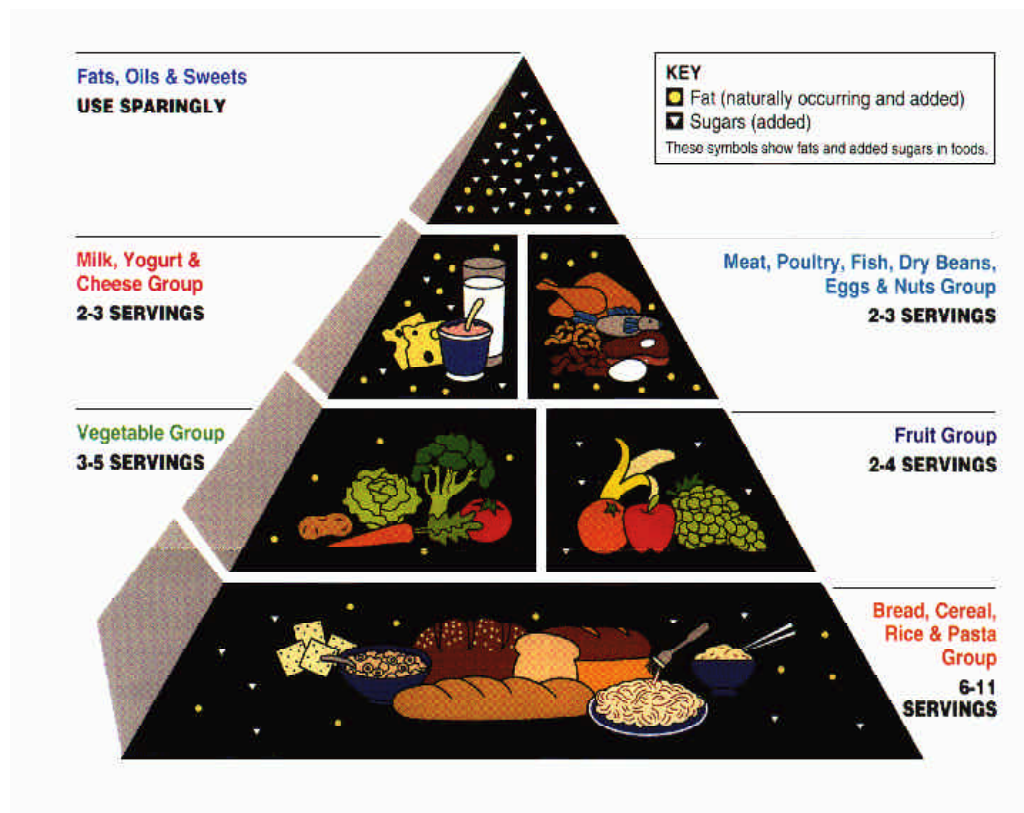
Limit the High Fat and Calorie Choices

- Limit added fat and sugar when cooking by using cooking spray, herbs, spices, low-sodium bouillon, onions, and salsa.
- Limit the gravy, margarine, butter, salad dressing, mayonnaise, cream, half & half, cream cheese, and sour cream added to foods.
- Avoid foods high in sugar like soft drinks, sweet tea, candy, cookies, and deserts.

Make Good Food Choices

Use the Food Guide Pyramid as a guide to healthy eating. Choose wisely within each food group with an emphasis on low-fat options. Be very aware of variety to ensure a balanced diet.

Moderation is the KEY! If your favorite food is high in fat and/or sugar, you probably can't have it as much as you like but you can have it every so often. Any food, in moderation, can fit into a healthy diet.



The Secret of the Pyramid

Just like a pyramid is built on a solid base, your diet should have a strong base of grains, fruits, and vegetables. The pyramid shows the food groups and what equals a serving. All foods can fit into a healthy diet, just remember to emphasize low-fat options.