

# Nutrition Guide

## Don't "weight" any longer!

**Achieving and maintaining a healthier body weight is important for optimising your health and well-being. You can begin to improve your health by just losing about 5-10% of your initial weight.**

So you have been advised by your healthcare provider to control your weight. Perhaps this is to help manage your medical condition, or it could be to lower your risk of getting certain health problems.

Well, are you ready to take action? Here are some suggestions to get you started:

- **Set realistic goals**

The optimal (and safe) rate of weight loss is ½ -1 kg per week. You're more likely to succeed if you set a sensible weight target, and make small changes step-by-step. Aim for gradual, long-term weight control to achieve overall good health, instead of rapid, short-term weight loss.



The fundamental principle of weight management is caloric balance. You gain weight when you consistently take in more calories than you use. Conversely, if you use more calories than what you consume, weight loss will occur overtime.

- **Choose wisely**

Foods laden with fat and oil are typically high in calories; so are alcoholic beverages (gram for gram, fat and alcohol contain more calories than carbohydrate or protein). Foods and drinks with high content of added sugars provide "empty calories", i.e. calories with little or no nutritional value. For weight control, eat less of foods high in fat and added sugars, and go easy on alcoholic beverages (if you drink).

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Ensure that you include a variety of plant-based foods such as whole-grains, vegetables, fruits and beans in your diet. These foods are rich in nutrients, provide bulk and may help you feel full for a longer period of time.

- **Get portion savvy**

A key element to effective weight management is to be mindful of the portion sizes of food you eat. Calories from any food can contribute to weight gain when the portions are bigger than what you need. Refer to the Healthy Diet Pyramid (go to the Health Promotion Board website at [www.hpb.gov.sg](http://www.hpb.gov.sg)) and find out the appropriate quantity of food that you should be eating.

- **Eat slowly**

Savour every bite of your food – why? It takes about 20 minutes for your brain to get the message from your stomach that you're full. Therefore, slowing down and enjoying your food may help to curb your urge for second (or more!) helpings.

- **Be regular**

Stick to a regular eating schedule. Avoid skipping meals, as this could lead to impulsive snacking and overeating at subsequent meals. It is also advisable to plan your meals (and snacks) ahead of time so you don't get trapped into making poor food choices.

- **Find your balance**

Even as you work towards reaching a healthier weight, you don't have to deprive yourself of high-calorie treats; they can still be an occasional indulgence. Enjoy them in moderation, and try to balance these high-calorie foods with lower calorie options over the course of a day.

Also, tip your caloric balance towards weight loss by engaging in regular physical activity! Physical activity burns calories and helps control body weight. It also improves fitness and reduces the risk of chronic diseases. Aim for 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity (e.g. brisk walking) every week – this can be accumulated in bouts of at least 10 minutes each time.

If you are currently inactive and have underlying medical conditions, check with your doctor before you embark on a physical activity programme.

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