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## Weight Management: Getting Started

Healthy bodies come in all shapes and sizes. Not all bodies are made to be thin. For some people, a healthy weight is higher than the average weight listed on weight charts. Your healthcare provider can help you decide on a healthy weight for you.



### Reasons to lose weight

Losing weight can help with some health problems, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, sleep apnea, and arthritis. You may also feel more energy.

### Set your long-term goal

Your goal doesn't even have to be a specific weight. You may decide on a fitness goal (such as being able to walk 10 miles a week), or a health goal (such as lowering your blood pressure). Choose a goal that is measurable and reasonable, so you know when you've reached it. A goal of reaching a BMI of less than 25 is not always reasonable (or possible).

### Make an action plan

Habits don't change overnight. Setting your goals too high can leave you feeling discouraged if you can't reach them. Be realistic. Choose one or two small changes you can make now. Set an action plan for how you are going to make these changes. When you can stick to this plan, keep making a few more small changes. Taking small steps will help you stay on the path to success.

### Track your progress

Write down your goals. Then, keep a daily record of your progress. Write down what you eat and how active you are. This record lets you look back on how much you've done. It may also help when you're feeling frustrated. Reward yourself for success. Even if you don't reach every goal, give yourself credit for what you do get done.

## Get support

Encouragement from others can help make losing weight easier. Ask your family members and friends for support. They may even want to join you. Also look to your healthcare provider, registered dietitian, and fitness professional for help. Your local hospital can give you more information about nutrition, exercise, and weight loss. Be sure to get a thorough checkup before you start any exercise program or change your diet.

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