

## A healthy lifestyle and a healthy weight can

- help you prevent or manage diabetes
- improve blood glucose, blood pressure and blood lipids (fats)
- reduce the risk of complications such as heart disease and stroke
- improve general well-being and energy levels

Healthy eating and physical activity are key lifestyle factors in managing weight. Many things can make managing weight a challenge including stress, low income levels, some medical conditions and certain medications.

## Who can help me?

There are many healthcare providers (e.g. dietitian, doctor, diabetes educator, pharmacist) who can help you. Check with them before taking any weight loss medications, supplements, starting intense exercise or changing your diet.

## A healthy weight can be measured in many ways including:

Body Mass Index (BMI) compares a person's weight to their height. For most adults aged 18 to 64, a BMI of 25 or higher\* is overweight.

Waist Circumference (WC) is the measurement around the waist. Too much fat around the waist is linked to health risks. WC goals differ depending on ethnic background and gender. In general, a healthy WC for men is less than 40 in (102 cm) and for women it is less than 35 in (88 cm).

If you are overweight, losing 5 to 10% of your current body weight at a rate of 2 to 4 lbs (1 to 2 kg) per month is a healthy goal. For someone who is 200 lbs (90 kg), 5 to 10% is 10 to 20 lbs (4.5 to 9 kg). For more information on measuring and interpreting your BMI and WC, visit Health Canada at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/weights-poids/guide-ld-adult/qa-qr-pub-eng.php>

\*Not including pregnant or lactating women, very muscular adults, adults with very lean build.

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**Date:**

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**Weight:**

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**BMI:**  $\frac{\text{Weight (kg)}}{\text{Height (m)} \times \text{Height (m)}}$

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**WC:**

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**My goal:**

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## Challenges and possible solutions

Planning ahead means having solutions to deal with weight management challenges.

Challenges I might face	Possible solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> I don't know how to start.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> I don't feel ready to change.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> I get discouraged and give up.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> When I lose weight I have trouble keeping it off.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> I think my health condition(s) prevents me from making lifestyle changes.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> My family and friends are not supportive of my weight loss plan.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> I make unhealthy choices when stressed, bored or for emotional reasons.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> I don't know what or how much to eat.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> I feel deprived when I follow a "diet".</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> I don't have time to be active and/or to eat well.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> It's hard to eat healthy and/or keep active when away from home.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Keeping active and eating well is too expensive.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Other: <hr/><hr/><hr/><hr/></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Meet with a healthcare provider to:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- discuss your situation and readiness to change;</li><li>- set realistic goals and develop a personal plan; and</li><li>- help you with your challenges.</li></ul></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Discuss your goals with friends and family. Suggest how they can help.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Look for support and/or resources in your community.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Be a healthy role model.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Plan ahead (e.g. make weekly menus and grocery lists, schedule time for exercise).</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Keep track of things that affect your choices.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Learn about eating sensible portions and balanced meals and snacks. Avoid fad diets.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Check out <i>Just the Basics</i>, <i>Beyond the Basics</i>, Canada's Food and Activity Guides.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Reward yourself with something other than food when you reach a goal with something other than food.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> What else helps me? <hr/><hr/><hr/><hr/></li></ul>

## Believe in yourself

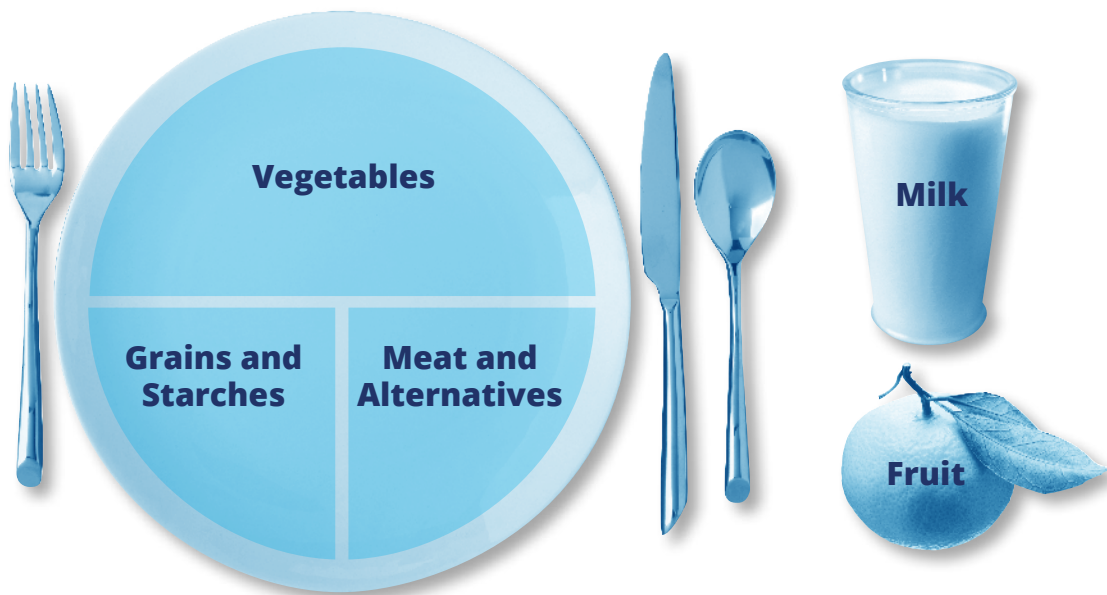
Each person's body has its own size and shape. Feel good about yourself and the lifestyle changes you make. Remember to think long-term, but make changes gradually.

## Lifestyle tips for a healthy weight

The key to reaching and staying at a healthy weight is to make lifestyle changes you can live with. Set realistic goals. Make one or two small changes at a time. When these changes are part of your daily routine, add new ones.

Goal	Tips	Changes I will make
<b>Build exercise into your day</b>	Exercise helps muscles use glucose and burn calories. Do aerobic exercises such as brisk walking, skiing, or biking for at least 150 minutes each week (e.g. 30 minutes, 5 days a week). If you can, increase the amount of time and intensity gradually. Add resistance exercises like lifting weights 3 times a week. Check with your doctor before starting.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Eat only when hungry</b>	Ask yourself if you are really hungry. Avoid eating out of habit, boredom or for emotional reasons. Eat slowly. It takes your brain about 20 minutes to realize that your stomach is full.	<hr/> <hr/>
<b>Create a healthy eating environment</b>	Plate your food in the kitchen and bring your plate to the table. Keep extra servings in the kitchen to reduce the temptation to overeat. Eat at the table rather than in front of a screen (TV or computer).	<hr/> <hr/>
<b>Eat regular balanced meals</b>	Eating 3 meals a day reduces overeating. Start with a healthy breakfast. Each food group is important. Meals should be spaced 4 to 6 hours apart.	<hr/> <hr/>
<b>Choose appropriate portions</b>	Too much food, healthy or not, leads to weight gain. If you can, check your portions with measuring cups or scales. Talk to a dietitian about how much food is right for you. See <i>The Plate Method</i> on the next page.	<hr/> <hr/>
<b>Eat fibre-rich foods</b>	High-fibre foods may help to keep you feeling full longer. Whole grains, vegetables, fruits and legumes (dried beans and lentils) are high in fibre.	<hr/> <hr/>
<b>Choose healthy beverages and snacks</b>	Satisfy thirst with water. Pop, sweetened hot or cold drinks, juice and alcohol can add many unwanted calories. Small snacks can help control hunger. Keep pre-cut vegetables and washed fruit handy for easy snacking. Avoid fried, salty and sugary snacks.	<hr/> <hr/>

## The Plate Method



### Special considerations for people with diabetes

People with diabetes must balance a healthy weight with the need to keep their blood glucose levels within target range. Talk to your healthcare team about what is right for you.

- Weight loss and lifestyle changes can affect blood glucose control. Find out how by testing your blood glucose level at recommended times and tracking your progress. Diabetes medications may need to be reviewed.
- If lifestyle changes do not lead to appropriate weight loss, talk to your healthcare team about other options.
- Some complications such as high blood pressure, foot ulcers or eye damage may change the types of exercises you can do.
- Try not to let the fear of low blood glucose prevent you from being physically active and/or eating smaller servings.
- Some diabetes medications may affect weight.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

Positive lifestyle changes, even small ones, can help you achieve and maintain a healthy weight and improve your overall health. **Eat well, be active, be yourself!**

**Related articles:** *Physical activity and diabetes, Just the basics, Managing your blood glucose, Managing weight and diabetes: BMI and waist circumference*

**DIABETES CANADA** | diabetes.ca | 1-800 BANTING (226-8464)

Diabetes Canada is making the invisible epidemic of diabetes visible and urgent. Eleven million Canadians have diabetes or prediabetes. Now is the time to End Diabetes - its health impacts as well as the blame, shame and misinformation associated with it. Diabetes Canada partners with Canadians to End Diabetes through education and support services, resources for health-care professionals, advocacy to governments, schools and workplaces, and, funding research to improve treatments and find a cure.

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