

Your Care Instructions

Being at a healthy weight can help you have energy for work and play. Carrying extra weight can lead to serious health problems, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and arthritis. It can also make these problems worse. If you carry extra weight and it's affecting your health, you can work with your doctor to make healthy changes.

Your doctor will talk with you about your weight and lifestyle. Then they may recommend making changes to your eating and exercise habits. Start by making small behaviour changes that you can control, and focus on the ones you can keep up.

To lose weight, you need to burn more calories than you take in. Cutting calories may help you lose weight, but it's important to make healthy lifestyle changes and food choices that you can stick to for the rest of your life. And remember, health isn't all about weight. Some health problems (such as high blood pressure) can get a lot better by doing things like making healthier food choices, even if you don't lose any weight.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor or nurse call line if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- **Focus on what you can control**, and set realistic goals. There are many ways to eat a healthy diet, where no foods need to be excluded. Remember to:
 - Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits, whole grains and protein foods. Choose protein foods that come from plants more often.
 - Paying attention to what you eat and drink can help you manage your weight.
 - Eat slowly and don't do anything else, such as watch TV, while you are eating.
 - Pay attention to portion sizes. Put your food on a smaller plate.
 - Plan your meals ahead of time. You'll be less likely to grab something that's not as healthy.
- **Increase your activity level.** Regular activity can help you feel better, and have more energy. If you haven't been active, start slowly. Start with at least 30 minutes of moderate activity on most days of

the week. Then gradually increase the amount of activity. Try for 60 or 90 minutes a day, at least five days a week. There are a lot of ways to fit activity into your life. You can:

- Walk or bike to the store. Walk with a friend or walk the dog.
 - Mow the lawn, rake leaves, shovel snow, or do some gardening.
 - Use the stairs instead of the elevator, at least for a few floors.
- **Change your thinking.** Your thoughts have a lot to do with how you feel and what you do. When you're trying to reach a healthy weight, changing how you think about certain things may help. Here are some ideas:
 - Don't compare yourself to others. Healthy bodies come in all shapes and sizes.
 - Pay attention to how hungry or full you feel. When you eat, be aware of why you're eating and how much you're eating.
 - Focus on improving your health instead of dieting. Dieting almost never works over the long term.
 - **Ask your doctor about other health professionals who can help you** reach a healthy weight.
 - A dietitian can help you make healthy changes in your diet.
 - An exercise specialist or personal trainer can help you develop a safe and effective exercise program.
 - A counsellor or psychiatrist can help you cope with issues such as depression, anxiety, or family problems that can make it hard to focus on reaching a healthy weight.
 - **Get support** from your family, your doctor, your friends, a support group—and support yourself.

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information call Health Link at 811.

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