

## HEALTH EDUCATION

In 1900, 5% of Americans were overweight or obese. Today, over 66% of Americans are. What two things have brought on this change?

- Being less active
- Having more high-fat, high-calorie, low-cost fast food

Weight loss is not just about food or exercise – it’s a lifestyle change. You cannot expect to change lifelong habits right away. Here are some ideas that will help you make better choices about eating.

### Know Your Problem Times

Stop and think about why you eat.

- Do you eat when you’re bored or tired?
- Do you skip breakfast?
- Do you eat at fast food places most days of the week for convenience?
- Are you eating for comfort?

Knowing where, how often, and why you eat is the first step in learning what changes you can make to live a healthier lifestyle.

### Eat Only When You Are Hungry

Many people find that they eat simply out of habit. You need to learn the difference between “head hunger” and “stomach hunger.” Make a list of things you enjoy that have nothing to do with food or eating.

Hang it up where you will see it often. If you are bored or if “head hunger” strikes, try doing something on your list to get your mind off food.

### Gain Support

Whether it’s a friend or a family member, having someone to help keep you on track is a key to success. Ask for help from people who care about you and your weight loss goals. Tell them what is helpful and what is not. Better yet, have them join you.

### Keep Food Records

Keeping food records is like balancing your checkbook. The task of writing down what you eat, as well as the amount you eat, is a good way to make you aware of what you are putting into your mouth. Don’t forget to include fluids in your record. Use your record as a quick way to see where you can improve.

### Keep Tempting Foods Out of Sight

Keeping your home free of “trigger foods” is helpful when you are trying to lose weight or manage weight loss. The saying ‘out of sight, out of mind’ does have some truth to it. Keep tempting foods out of your home.

You will find many trigger foods away from home. Plan ahead and don't arrive hungry. This will help you avoid overeating. It is helpful to cook most meals at home so that you are in control of what is on your plate.

## Beat Temptation

If temptation strikes, set a timer for 15 minutes and give yourself a "time out" to get back on track and remember your long-term goal. If, after your timeout, you still crave that food, it's okay to have some... just don't overdo it.

## No Need to Banish Foods

Don't tell yourself you can never have a certain food again because you will crave it right away. Think, "I know I can have it, but will this help me reach my goal of good health?" Keep portions small.

## Hints for Mealtimes

- Serve food on smaller plates. You can also use smaller forks and spoons if you have them.
- Put your fork down between bites and chew slowly. This will help you avoid overeating before you realize you had too much.
- Serve gravy, sauce, and salad dressing on the side, and use just enough to get a taste.

## Stop Before You Are Full

Stop eating before you feel full. It takes about 20 minutes for your brain to know that you have had enough food.

## Tips for Snacking

- Keep all food in the kitchen. Eat only while at the kitchen or dining table.
- Do not eat food right out of the container. Put only a small serving on a plate and don't go back for "seconds."
- Don't eat while watching TV, talking on the phone, or surfing the internet. If you are distracted from how much you are eating, it is easy to eat too much.
- Drink plenty of water.

## Forget Crash Dieting

When you lose weight quickly your body loses mostly water, not fat. Your body thinks that it is starving and lowers its metabolic rate. This makes it harder for your body to burn the calories you do eat.

## Set Goals that You Can Reach

Weight loss is a slow process. Reaching and keeping a healthy weight is a lifetime process, not an instant makeover. Try to lose no more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  -2 pounds per week.

My weight loss goal: \_\_\_\_\_

## Attitude is Key

Eat to live, don't live to eat. Enjoy eating, but be sure to find other sources of fun. If you have a bad day, forgive yourself and move on. Focus on your successes. You don't have to give up your favorite foods. To achieve success, balance what you eat and how active you are.