



Strategies for Weight Loss

Remove any foods you have chosen to not eat so they will not tempt you during weak moments.

Record your food intake. Track how you are feeling, especially during times of snacking and overeating. Note how you feel after overeating or eating the wrong foods at the wrong time.

Know your most vulnerable times for snacking and overeating, and plan a defense before temptation strikes. Practice talking yourself out of overeating by going for a walk, exercising, phoning a friend, or meditating.

Never berate yourself, even if you overeat or eat fattening foods. Most people do this too much already. Learn from the experience, and know that you can always turn it around immediately and get back to your weight loss goals.

Talk back to the obsessions if you find yourself obsessing about food. Say to yourself, “knock it off” and get back to doing what you need to do (i.e., work, school, family, friends, life).

Eat slowly, sitting at the table. Eating while reading or watching TV is distracting and causes unconscious overeating. Mindless snacking in front of the TV is especially dangerous.

Practice finishing your meal before you are completely full. Tell yourself the next meal is only a few hours away and you will not die before eating again. Remind yourself how good it feels not to be sluggishly stuffed or “buzzed out” from too much sugar.

Manage your emotions. If you find yourself unable to stop overeating because of strong emotions, think about getting counseling. Eating should be only for the physical body, not for handling emotions. Overeating just makes you feel worse and does not deal with the underlying issues.

Learn meditation techniques. This can help with stress management so you are better able to manage your emotions and not overeat. There are many books and tapes on this topic.

Get moving! You do not need a gym membership or fancy clothes to work out. Start at home with simple aerobic and stretching exercises. Increase slowly and consistently. Make exercise fun and part of your routine for the rest of your life. The endorphins it produces can counter fatigue and depression.

Move throughout the day. Take the stairs, park a distance from the store, walk at work during breaks, or stretch while waiting in line.

Try positive affirmations. Practice saying to yourself: “I am healthy and happy,” “I have plenty of energy,” or “My body has all it needs.” These phrases will help boost your confidence as you work to eat normally, exercise, and lose weight.

Invite others to exercise with you for added support. However, do not become overly dependent on others to keep you going. If they drop out, you may, too.

Sample Patient Counseling Messages for Weight Loss

- **“You are overweight, based on the appropriate weight for a person of your height. I’d like to work with you in reducing the number of calories you eat and suggest ways for you to increase your daily activity level.”**
- **“I’m concerned about your weight because I think it’s causing health problems for you. Even a 10 percent weight loss can result in numerous benefits including improved cholesterol and blood sugar, a decrease in blood pressure and heart rate, and improved mood.”**
- **“Losing weight might allow you to take fewer medications. Let’s talk about ways to get you started. Even small steps can make a big difference.”**
- **“You seem to get exercise only on the weekends, so let’s look at some ways you might increase your activity level during the week. For example, maybe there’s an upcoming exercise program in your area. These types of weekly activities involving others with similar goals can be a great way to get started on a healthy routine.”**
- **“I see you tend to eat just two or three fruits and vegetables a day. Let’s talk about ways you can increase those amounts and at the same time, cut down on more fattening foods.” (Show the food pyramid.)**
- **“It’s terrific that you’re working so hard on your nutrition and physical activity goals. What have been your biggest challenges? I have some techniques and local resources that can help develop healthy habits. (See behavior modification tips.) If you’re interested, I can also refer you to a dietician, counselor, or personal trainer.”**