



Strive for a Healthy Weight

Healthy Living Message

What's Important to Know?

Maintaining a healthy weight can help you feel better and have more energy. It can also help prevent and control many chronic diseases and conditions. Being overweight or obese increases your risk for diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol problems, heart disease, gallbladder disease, female health disorders, arthritis, some types of cancer, and sleep apnea. Controlling your weight helps you stay healthy now and in the future.

A simple way to know if you are at a healthy weight is to know your body mass index (BMI). Maintaining a healthy weight means balancing the number of calories you eat with the calories your body uses or burns:

- If you maintain your weight, you are “in balance.” You are eating close to the same number of calories that your body is using. Your weight will remain stable.
- If you are losing weight, you are eating fewer calories than you are using. Your body is burning its fat storage cells for energy, so you will lose weight.
- If you are gaining weight, you are eating more calories than your body is using. These extra calories will be stored as fat, and you will gain weight.



If you are of normal weight, maintain it. If you need to lose weight, losing even a little will help. Losing as little as 5-10% of your current body weight can lower your risks for many diseases. To lose 1-2 pounds per week, reduce your intake by 500-1,000 calories each day.

Healthy eating and regular physical activity are keys to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. Eat wisely and choose a variety of low-calorie, high-nutrition foods and beverages in the basic food groups. For important health benefits, you should do at least 2½ hours each week of moderate-intensity, or 1¼ hours a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity or an equivalent combination of both.

Want to Know More?

If you want to learn more about managing your weight, talk with your VA health care team. For tools, resources, and programs to help you achieve a healthy weight, talk to a member of your facility's MOVE!® team. They can also help if you have questions about making a healthy living change. For more information go to: https://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Strive_for_a_Healthy_Weight.asp

Resources

- VHA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (NCP): www.prevention.va.gov
- MOVE! Weight Management Program for Veterans: <https://www.move.va.gov>
- Achieving and Maintaining a Healthy Weight: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight>
- Veterans Health Library: www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov