

Personalized Weight-Loss Plan

No one diet suits everyone.

People come in various shapes and sizes, have unique health issues and eating behaviors, and lose weight at different speeds. So why rely on standard weight-loss plans to satisfy your personal dietary needs?

Even formulated diets that offer balanced nutrition can feel rigid and boring. As the weight drops off so does your enjoyment of eating. Design a food plan that meets personal goals within your day-to-day life. Discuss weight loss with your health care provider, especially if you have diabetes, obesity or other chronic conditions.

Identify your eating preferences, behavior and habits that lead to weight gain such as:

- Eating excess sugar or refined grains.
- Eating big portions.
- Eating out a lot.
- Eating for emotional reasons.
- Consuming lots of high-calorie snacks, coffee or soft drinks, juices and/or alcohol.

Losing weight involves both mental and physical hurdles. Start by adjusting 1 habit at a time, such as replacing deep-fried foods with roasted versions.

If you lose weight gradually and steadily (about 1 to 2 pounds per week), you're more likely to keep the lost pounds gone.



Nutrition Essentials: Do You Need More of These?

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Did you know that the body requires more than 30 essential nutrients for good health? If you are eating a wide variety of mostly whole, unprocessed foods, you are probably getting all of the nutrients you need. But even with a great diet, studies show Americans don't get enough of several nutrients.



Vitamin D: It's essential for bone health, immunity, nerves and muscles, and may help protect against cancer. But it's found in very few foods. Sources include fatty fish (such as salmon and trout), eggs and fortified milk. Vitamin D is naturally formed in the body when the skin is exposed to the sun. Supplements are recommended for most adults, especially those in cool climates who get less daily sunlight. Aim for 600 IU to 800 IU per day.

Magnesium: This mineral helps regulate muscle and nerve function, and helps make protein and bone. People likely to have magnesium deficiency include older adults or those with celiac disease, Crohn's disease or type 2 diabetes. Good magnesium sources include beans, nuts, seeds, whole grains, leafy greens, milk and yogurt. Adults need 300 mg to 420 mg daily.



Calcium: It's vital for bone health and for releasing the hormones and enzymes needed for many body functions. Children aged 9 to 18 tend to not get enough, especially when they replace milk with soft drinks. Many women older than 50 also may not get enough. Calcium sources include milk, cheese, yogurt, leafy greens, canned salmon, sardines, and fortified beverages (e.g., almond milk). Adults need 1,000 mg to 1,200 mg per day.

>>>Note: Supplement amounts depend on age and gender.

New year, new attitude.

Enjoy the weight loss and stay positive. To succeed long term, fit in exercise and learn to eat, not diet.



January is Thyroid Awareness Month.

Thyroid trouble? The thyroid gland produces hormones that aid metabolism and energy use, among other functions. When the thyroid underproduces hormones, hypothyroidism occurs, causing weight gain, fatigue, hoarseness, constipation and cold intolerance. For persistent symptoms, see your health care provider. Left untreated, it can lead to obesity, joint pain, infertility and heart disease.



Beat Monday morning blues. These suggestions may help you say goodbye to feeling down whenever your workweek starts:

- 1 **Change your attitude about Mondays.** Make a list, and consider possible solutions. Start with the changes that you have the most control over.
- 2 **Stay organized.** Before the weekend, tidy your work space and plan next week's tasks. Keep Mondays low-key if you can.
- 3 **Cultivate friendships.** Work is more pleasurable when you connect with your coworkers.
- 4 **Visualize success.** Imagine going through a workday and handling challenges effectively. — Eric Endlich, PhD



“Taking care of your mental and physical health is just as important as any career move or responsibility.”

— Mireille Guiliano

5 Ways to Foil Sleep Thieves

Many obvious things can disrupt sleep occasionally, from a barking dog to a noisy party across the street. But some sleep thieves are stealthier.



Avoid these sneaky sleep robbers:

1. **Don't eat within 3 to 4 hours of bedtime.** Research shows the sooner you go to bed after eating, the more likely you'll have heartburn and, if you have **gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)**, symptoms may be severe enough to keep you tossing and turning.
2. **Skip late-night workouts.** Regular exercise earlier in the day will help you sleep. But physical activity 3 hours or fewer before bedtime can rev you up and keep you from falling asleep.
3. **Hit the off switch.** All lights, including LED bulbs and electronic devices (yes, that includes your phone) can confuse the brain, disrupting normal body rhythms, which can make getting to sleep even harder.
4. **Tell your health care provider if you snore.** If you snore, you may have **sleep apnea** (short pauses in breathing that interfere with the deep, restful sleep cycle). Other signs of sleep apnea include gasping or choking during sleep, excessive restlessness at night or sleepiness during the day.
5. **Skip drinking near bedtime.** Caffeinated drinks late in the day can keep you awake. And an alcoholic drink at bedtime is more likely to disrupt your slumber.

Why You Shouldn't Self Diagnose

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

The internet offers a wide variety of medical information, though, unfortunately, it's not always current or reliable.

Health articles from reputable websites can be a good place to start, but they are not definitive or individualized for you. Regardless of where you get your information, diagnosing your own ailments can lead to several problems:

Self-diagnosis or ignoring certain symptoms can delay the diagnosis of a disease. For example, if you decide stress is causing your fatigue, you may fail to get evaluated for other underlying disorders such as anemia, low thyroid or diabetes. Many conditions are most treatable when they are caught early and receive prompt care.

Some symptoms can indicate more than 1 illness. For example, you may think you suffer from anxiety. But 2 out of 3 people with anxiety have depression as well. Most health care providers have studied for years to learn how to recognize associated or look-alike conditions.

People who research symptoms online often assume the worst. Seeing your provider to find out what you have is often reassuring; many times it is not what you fear.

Some people convince themselves they have a particular disease and request every available exam. But unnecessary tests raise medical costs and your health insurance may not cover them.

Call your provider as soon as possible if your symptoms are persistent, recurrent or severe. If you're ever in doubt, call your provider for advice.



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