



Healthy Directions /

# Plan My Changes



# Making a Plan

The information in this packet will help you make a plan. When your plan is done, it will help you:

- **remember** why you're making health changes
- **know** what your specific goals are
- **decide** which friends and family members you can count on for support
- **take** small steps toward your goals
- **think** about things that might get in your way
- **figure out** how to get past those things

As you're making your plan, remember to use your **Healthy Tips** book! It will help you think about day-to-day health habits and your goals. It's best to make a plan when you start Healthy Directions, and then go back and think about it again about three months later.

And don't forget to track your health habits using your **Track My Changes** materials as you follow your plans and make healthy changes.

Turn the page to get started!

# 1. Why did you join Healthy Directions?

People have many different reasons for making health changes. What's yours? Write in your answer below, or check off a reason from the list.

- ☐ I want to feel healthier.
- ☐ I want to have more energy.
- ☐ It's important to set a good example for my family.
- ☐ My reason for making health changes: \_\_\_\_\_

# 2. What We Recommend for Good Health

It's great that you want to make some health changes! Healthy Directions recommends these 5 habits:

- ☐ Walk 10,000 or more steps a day. (Make a plan on page 3.)
- ☐ Eat 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables a day. (Make a plan on page 4.)
- ☐ Eat no more than 3 servings of red meat a week. (Make a plan on page 5.)
- ☐ Take a multivitamin every day. (Make a plan on page 6.)
- ☐ Do not smoke. (Make a plan on page 7.)

You may do some of these things already. Healthy Directions can help you work on as many more as you want to! Remember that you can work on changing many health habits at the same time. Check off the health habits you want to work on.

# 3. Who can help you work on these health habits?

The buddy system really works. It is easier to make changes when someone supports you. Friends and family can remind you of your goals. They can help you with things that get in your way. Your buddies can also cheer you on!

Who can support you with your healthy changes?

- |  |  |                                    |
|--|--|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> husband or wife         | <input type="checkbox"/> mom or dad        | <input type="checkbox"/> co-worker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> girlfriend or boyfriend | <input type="checkbox"/> sister or brother | <input type="checkbox"/> neighbor  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> partner                 | <input type="checkbox"/> best friend       | <input type="checkbox"/> _____     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> son or daughter         | <input type="checkbox"/> roommate          | <input type="checkbox"/> _____     |

# A. Physical Activity—10,000 Steps a Day

## 4. Small steps I can take to reach my goal:

Small steps add up to big changes. Pick the things below that will help you reach your goal.

- ☐ I can take a walk around my neighborhood each day.
- ☐ I can get off the bus or train one stop early.
- ☐ I can take the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator at work each day.
- ☐ I can take my dog for a longer daily walk.
- ☐ I can start a walking group with friends or neighbors.
- ☐ I can walk with my family every day.
- ☐ My idea: \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. Things that might get in my way:

Pick 1 or 2 things that might get in the way of your goal. Write the first thing in Step 5a. Write the second thing in Step 5b.

- ☐ I don't feel safe.
- ☐ I don't have time.
- ☐ It's too dark outside at night.
- ☐ The weather is bad.
- ☐ Joining a gym costs too much.
- ☐ I lost my pedometer.

### 5a. One thing that might get in my way: (from Step 5)

\_\_\_\_\_

Ways I can overcome it: (see page 8 for examples)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 5b. Another thing that might get in my way: (from Step 5)

\_\_\_\_\_

Ways I can overcome it: (see page 8 for examples)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# B. Fruits and Vegetables—5 to 9 Servings a Day

## 4. Small steps I can take to reach my goal:

Small steps add up to big changes. Pick the things below that will help you reach your goal.

- ☐ I can keep fruit in the refrigerator or on my kitchen counter so it's handy.
- ☐ I can add a banana or strawberries to my breakfast cereal.
- ☐ I can pack an apple or orange in my lunch.
- ☐ I can have a salad for lunch.
- ☐ I can include a salad with my dinner.
- ☐ I can add chopped vegetables to pasta sauces or pizzas.
- ☐ I can buy frozen or canned fruits and vegetables when fresh ones aren't in season.
- ☐ My idea:

## 5. Things that might get in my way:

Pick 1 or 2 things that might get in the way of your goal. Write the first thing in **Step 5a**. Write the second thing in **Step 5b**.

- ☐ My family won't eat fruits or vegetables.
- ☐ I eat out a lot, so it's hard to get enough fruits and vegetables.
- ☐ Fruits and vegetables cost too much.
- ☐ I don't know how to choose or cook vegetables.
- ☐ I don't have time to cook.
- ☐ I don't like fruits or vegetables.

## 5a. One thing that might get in my way: (from Step 5)

### Ways I can overcome it: (see page 9 for examples)

## 5b. Another thing that might get in my way: (from Step 5)

### Ways I can overcome it: (see page 9 for examples)

# C. Red Meat—No More than 3 Servings a Week

## 4. Small steps I can take to reach my goal:

Small steps add up to big changes. Pick the things below that will help you reach your goal.

- ☐ I can cook turkey, chicken, or fish instead.
- ☐ I can cook with beans and lentils, which both have a lot of protein (the way red meat does).
- ☐ I can cook with tofu, which has as much protein as meat.
- ☐ When I do buy meat, I can buy lean cuts (with "loin" or "round" on the package).
- ☐ I can make serving sizes of meat 3 ounces or less (the size of a deck of cards).
- ☐ My idea:

## 5. Things that might get in my way:

Pick 1 or 2 things that might get in the way of your goal. Write the first thing in **Step 5a**. Write the second thing in **Step 5b**.

- ☐ My family only eats red meat.
- ☐ I don't know how to cook other kinds of food.
- ☐ I don't like chicken, turkey, or fish.
- ☐ I don't have time to cook.
- ☐ Other foods may cost more than red meat.

## 5a. One thing that might get in my way: (from Step 5)

### Ways I can overcome it: (see page 10 for examples)

## 5b. Another thing that might get in my way: (from Step 5)

### Ways I can overcome it: (see page 10 for examples)

# D. Multivitamins—Take One Every Day

## 4. Small steps I can take to reach my goal:

Small steps add up to big changes. Pick the things below that will help you reach your goal.

- ☐ I can keep my multivitamins in a place where I'll remember to take one.
- ☐ I can buy generic brand multivitamins to save money.
- ☐ I can keep extra multivitamins in my bag in case I forget to take one at home.
- ☐ I can make it a habit by taking my multivitamin at the same time every day (with breakfast, for example).
- ☐ My idea:

## 5. Things that might get in my way:

Pick 1 or 2 things that might get in the way of your goal. Write the first thing in **Step 5a**. Write the second thing in **Step 5b**.

- ☐ I don't think I need multivitamins.
- ☐ I can't remember to take a pill every day.
- ☐ Multivitamins cost too much.
- ☐ I don't like swallowing pills.
- ☐ I don't like how multivitamins make me feel.

## 5a. One thing that might get in my way: (from Step 5)

### Ways I can overcome it: (see page 11 for examples)

## 5b. Another thing that might get in my way: (from Step 5)

### Ways I can overcome it: (see page 11 for examples)

# E. Smoking—Do Not Smoke

## 4. Small steps I can take to reach my goal:

Small steps add up to big changes. Pick the things below that will help you reach your goal.

- ☐ I can make a list of things I don't like about smoking.
- ☐ I can start cutting down on smoking.
- ☐ I can figure out the best quit-smoking plan for me.
- ☐ With help from Healthy Directions, I can learn about local quit-smoking resources.
- ☐ With help from Healthy Directions, I can learn about quit-smoking medications.
- ☐ I can ask my doctor for help.
- ☐ I can talk to other people who have quit smoking and ask for their help.
- ☐ My idea:

## 5. Things that might get in my way:

Pick 1 or 2 things that might get in the way of your goal. Write the first thing in **Step 5a**. Write the second thing in **Step 5b**.

- ☐ I've tried to quit before and it didn't work.
- ☐ I'm addicted to smoking.
- ☐ All my friends smoke.
- ☐ Smoking helps me relax or calm down.
- ☐ Quit-smoking medications cost too much.

## 5a. One thing that might get in my way: (from Step 5)

### Ways I can overcome it: (see page 12 for examples)

## 5b. Another thing that might get in my way: (from Step 5)

### Ways I can overcome it: (see page 12 for examples)

# Physical Activity

Pick 1 or 2 things that might get in the way of your goal, then pick some ideas for overcoming them. Next, copy those things into the Physical Activity page (page 3) of your My Plan booklet.

## I don't feel safe.

### > WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Walk with friends or family.
- Walk at your local Y or community center.
- Walk in a mall.
- Find out if your local school allows people to walk in the gym after school hours.
- Walk around the track at a local school.
- Take a walk during lunch.

## It's too dark outside at night.

### > WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Walk with friends or family instead of going alone.
- Wear light-colored clothing.
- Wear clothing with reflective patches.
- Exercise in your house or apartment.
- Walk in the mall.
- Walk in the morning.
- Walk at your local Y or community center.

## I don't have time.

### > WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Take a walk on the weekend, when you have more time.
- Take a walk early in the morning, before your day starts.
- Have a friend or family member watch your kids while you walk. Or take your kids along.
- Take a walk during a break at work.
- Add steps by walking for errands. Get off the T or bus one stop early.
- If you drive, park further away and get extra steps.

## Joining a gym costs too much.

### > WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Walking is free. You don't need to join a gym to walk!
- Find out if your health insurance company will pay for part of the membership.
- Ask if your work offers a gym membership. They may also pay for part of it.
- Join a Y or community center. The rates are usually much lower.
- Check the Resources booklet for free or low-cost ideas.

## The weather is bad.

### > WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Wear extra clothes in the winter. Layers will keep you warm. You may feel cold at first, but exercising will warm you up.
- If it's hot out, walk early or late in the day. Stay in the shade. Carry water with you.
- Walk on an indoor track at the Y, community athletic center, or local school.
- Walk in the mall.

# Fruits and Vegetables

Pick 1 or 2 things that might get in the way of your goal, then pick some ideas for overcoming them. Next, copy those things into the Fruits and Vegetables page (page 4) of your My Plan booklet.

## I eat out a lot, so it's hard to get enough fruits and vegetables.

### > WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Ask for vegetables instead of fries.
- Order a salad with your meal.
- If you are eating fast food, pick places that offer vegetables or salads.
- Pack your lunch.
- Make dinner at home. Invite friends or family over.
- Bring fruits and vegetables as a snack.

## Fruits and vegetables cost too much.

### > WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Buy fruits and vegetables that are in season. They cost less.
- Big bags of apples or oranges are usually cheaper.
- Visit a local farmer's market.
- Try a local warehouse store.
- Buy canned or frozen fruits and vegetables. Buy fruits that are packed in water or 100% fruit juice. Buy vegetables that don't have added salt.
- Buy canned or frozen fruits and vegetables when they are on sale. You'll have them on hand when you need them. You'll also save money.

## I don't have time to cook.

### > WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Make extra servings when you cook. Store the extras in the freezer.
- Plan a week's menus ahead of time. Cook what you can over the weekend, when you have more time.
- Ask your family to help you in the kitchen. Give everyone a job to do.
- Buy fruits and vegetables that are already washed and cut.
- Make recipes that take less than 30 minutes.

## I don't know how to choose or cook vegetables.

### > WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Ask friends or family to show you how to clean and prepare vegetables.
- Ask friends and family for vegetable recipes.
- Borrow a cookbook from the library.
- Have your family help you clean and prepare vegetables.
- Some vegetables (like broccoli, carrots, and cauliflower) can be eaten raw. Be sure to clean all raw vegetables before you eat them.

## I don't like fruits or vegetables/My family won't eat them.

### > WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Keep trying new fruits and vegetables until you find ones that you (or your family) like.
- Dip vegetables in low-fat or fat-free salad dressing. If you have kids, this is a fun way to introduce them to new veggies.
- Add chopped vegetables to some favorite recipes. Try adding carrots, broccoli, and peppers to spaghetti sauce.
- Dip fruits in low-fat or fat-free yogurt.
- Remind yourself (or your family) that fruits and vegetables are healthy.



# Red Meat

Pick 1 or 2 things that might get in the way of your goal, then pick some ideas for overcoming them. Next, copy those things into the Red Meat page (page 5) of your My Plan booklet.

## My family only eats red meat.

> WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Talk with your family about why eating less meat is healthy for everyone.
- Make some of your family's favorite recipes with ground turkey or chicken instead of red meat. Try lasagna with ground turkey. Make sandwiches with grilled chicken or turkey instead of lunch meats like bologna or salami.
- Try bean dishes like rice and beans or baked beans.
- Keep offering healthy, lean protein to your kids.
- Make a non-red meat dish for yourself. Or eat more of the side dishes and less red meat.

## I don't like chicken, turkey, or fish.

> WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Try new combinations of herbs, spices, and sauces when you cook with ground turkey or chicken.
- Try bean dishes like rice and beans or baked beans.
- Ask friends and family for recipe ideas.
- Visit the Recipes for Health booklet. Try a new meat-free recipe—you might like it!

## I don't know how to cook other kinds of foods.

> WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Ask friends and family for help with recipes.
- Check the Recipes for Health booklet for recipes that use chicken, turkey, or fish.
- Take a cooking class at a community center or watch cooking shows on TV.

## I don't have time to cook.

> WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Make extra meals when you cook. Store them in your freezer.
- Plan a week's menus ahead of time. Cook what you can over the weekend, when you have time.
- Ask your family to help you in the kitchen. Give everyone a job to do.
- Buy some healthy prepared meals from the grocery store.
- Buy prepared ingredients, like pre-washed and cut vegetables to add to recipes.
- Make recipes that take 30 minutes or less. Check the Recipes for Health booklet for easy, tasty ideas.

# Multivitamins

Pick 1 or 2 things that might get in the way of your goal, then pick some ideas for overcoming them. Next, copy those things into the Multivitamins page (page 6) of your My Plan booklet.

## I don't think I need multivitamins.

> WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Ask your doctor to explain why multivitamins are important.
- See if your health center or pharmacy has information about how multivitamins work to keep you healthy.
- Remember that it can be hard to get all the nutrients you need from food. Multivitamins are an easy way to help fill in the gaps.

## I can't afford to buy multivitamins.

> WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Buy the store brand. They work the same as the brand-name multivitamins and cost much less.
- Buy multivitamins in bigger bottles. Each pill will cost less.
- Healthy Directions will be giving everyone a free 3-month supply of multivitamins.

## I can't remember to take a pill every day.

> WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Take your multivitamin at the same time every day, when you do something else. For example, take it when you drink juice in the morning.
- Put a reminder note on a place you see every day, like your refrigerator or your bathroom mirror.
- Buy a pillbox. If you already use a pillbox, add a multivitamin for each day.
- Keep some multivitamins in your bag, locker, or desk drawer. If you forget at home, you can take one later.

## I don't like swallowing pills.

> WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Multivitamins come in many shapes and sizes. Try different types until you find one that is easier to swallow.
- Take a liquid multivitamin. It comes in a large bottle. Each day you pour out and drink one dose.
- Take a chewable multivitamin.

## I don't like how multivitamins make me feel.

> WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Take your multivitamin with food.
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist. They may have tips on how to deal with side effects.
- Remember that multivitamins do your body a lot of good.

I’ve tried to quit before, and it didn’t work.

> WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Most smokers have to quit many times before they can stay quit. Don’t give up!
- Did you have a hard time dealing with cravings? Then quit-smoking medication might be for you.
- Be sure to develop a plan before quitting. This includes setting a quit date and preparing for it mentally and physically. Healthy Directions can help.
- Get support from someone you’re close to.

All of my friends smoke.

> WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Go out with friends who don’t smoke while you are quitting.
- Ask smokers to help you by not offering you cigarettes or smoking when they are around you.
- Go with friends to places where you can’t smoke, like the movies.

I’m addicted to smoking.

> WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Learn about quit-smoking medications. These can make it much easier to deal with cravings.
- Learn how to tame cravings. Try waiting 5 minutes before having a cigarette, or drink a large glass of water when a craving hits.
- Know that you can conquer cravings with the right combination of quit-smoking medication, help from people around you, and tips from Healthy Directions.
- Visit [www.quitworks.org](http://www.quitworks.org), the quit-smoking site recommended by Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates.

I can’t afford quit-smoking medication.

> WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Most insurance plans cover some or all of the cost of quit-smoking medications. Many also offer quit-smoking counseling programs. Ask yours what is covered.
- Some employers offer quit-smoking programs and may cover some or all of the cost of medication.
- Visit [www.quitworks.org](http://www.quitworks.org), the quit-smoking site recommended by Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates.

Smoking helps me relax or calm down.

> WAYS YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS:

- Try dealing with stressful situations by doing deep-breathing exercises.
- Exercise is a great way to release tension. Take a quick walk instead of smoking.
- Call or text friends and vent to them.
- Chew gum or eat something healthy and crunchy, like carrots.

Notes



