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Weight Control

Why is weight control important?

If you are struggling with your weight, you are not alone. In the United States, more than 70 percent of adults are overweight or have obesity [<https://medlineplus.gov/obesity.html>] . Having this extra weight raises your risk for many health conditions, such as type 2 diabetes [<https://medlineplus.gov/diabetestype2.html>] , heart disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/heartdiseases.html>] , kidney disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/kidneydiseases.html>] , and certain cancers.

Reaching and staying at a healthy weight can be challenging. But having a healthy lifestyle, including healthy eating patterns and regular physical activity, can help you lose weight. It can also lower your chance of developing weight-related health conditions.

What factors affect weight and health?

You gain weight when you take in more calories (through food and drinks) than you use up from physical activity and daily living. But there are many different factors that can affect weight gain, such as:

- **The world around you.** Your home, community, and workplace all may affect how you make daily lifestyle choices. For example:
 - It is often easier to find food and beverages high in calories, sugar, and fat [<https://medlineplus.gov/dietaryfats.html>] . For instance, vending machines, cafeterias, and special events may not offer healthy, lower calorie options.
 - Less healthy foods may be cheaper than healthier foods.
 - Many people are getting less physical activity because they are spending more time using smartphones and other devices.
- **Families.** Overweight and obesity tend to run in families. Overweight and obesity tend to run in families. This suggests that genes may play a role in weight gain. Families may also share eating and lifestyle habits. For example, some families may often have foods and drinks that are high in calories, sugar, and fat. And some families may tend to be less active and spend more time doing things like sitting and watching TV or using computers.
- **Not enough sleep.** People who don't get enough sleep may eat more calories and snack more.
- **Emotions.** Some people eat when they feel bored, sad, or stressed, even if they are not hungry.
- **Medicines and health conditions.** Taking certain medicines, such as steroids [<https://medlineplus.gov/steroids.html>] and certain antidepressants [<https://medlineplus.gov/antidepressants.html>] , can lead to weight gain. Some chronic health problems can also cause you to gain weight. A few examples are Cushing's syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/cushingssyndrome.html>] and polycystic ovary syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/polycysticovarysyndrome.html>] (PCOS).

How can I get to and stay at a healthy weight?

Getting to and staying at a healthy weight involves finding a balance of food and activity. To lose weight, you need to take in fewer calories than you use up. Some ways to do this are:

- Eating more nutrient-rich foods, such as foods with lots of vitamins [<https://medlineplus.gov/vitamins.html>] , minerals [<https://medlineplus.gov/minerals.html>] , and fiber [<https://medlineplus.gov/dietaryfiber.html>] .

- Eating and drinking less of the foods and beverages that have lots of calories, salt [<https://medlineplus.gov/sodium.html>] , sugar, and fat.
- Limiting alcohol [<https://medlineplus.gov/alcohol.html>] .
- Finding healthier ways to cook, such as using healthier oils to cook with and baking or grilling instead of frying foods.
- Getting more physical activity [<https://medlineplus.gov/howmuchexercisedoineed.html>] . The general recommendation is for adults to get 150 minutes of physical activity each week, including:
 - Aerobic activity, which is also called cardio. It uses your large muscle groups (chest, legs, and back) to speed up your heart rate and breathing.
 - Muscle-strengthening activity, which is also called strength training. It works your muscles by making you push or pull against something.

You may decide to do these lifestyle changes on your own, or you may decide to try a weight-loss diet or program. Before you start, it's important to check with your health care provider first. Your provider can tell you what a healthy weight is for you, help you set goals, and give you tips on how to lose weight.

If making lifestyle changes or doing a weight-loss program are not enough to help you lose weight, your provider may prescribe medicines. The prescription medicines to treat overweight and obesity work in different ways. Some may help you feel less hungry or full sooner. Others may make it harder for your body to absorb fat from the foods you eat.

Another treatment is weight loss surgery [<https://medlineplus.gov/weightlosssurgery.html>] . Your provider may recommend the surgery if you have severe obesity or serious obesity-related health problems and you have not been able to lose enough weight.

NIH: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

Start Here

- About Healthy Weight and Growth [<https://www.cdc.gov/healthy-weight-growth/about/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Choosing a Safe and Successful Weight-Loss Program [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/weight-management/choosing-a-safe-successful-weight-loss-program>]
 (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
 Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/control-de-peso?dkrd=/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/control-de-peso/como-escoger-programa-para-adelgazar-seguro-exitoso>]
- Health Tips for Adults [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/weight-management/healthy-eating-physical-activity-for-life/health-tips-for-adults>]   (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
 Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/control-de-peso/alimentacion-saludable-actividad-fisica-vida/adultos>]

Diagnosis and Tests

- About Body Mass Index (BMI) [<https://www.cdc.gov/bmi/about/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
 Also in Spanish [<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/spanish/assessing/index.html>]
- Assessing Your Weight and Health Risk [https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/risk.htm]
 (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)
- Obesity Screening [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/obesity-screening/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
 Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/evaluacion-de-obesidad/>]

Treatments and Therapies

- 6 Things To Know About Dietary Supplements Marketed for Weight Loss [<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/tips/tips-know-the-facts-about-supplements-marketed-for-weight-loss>]  (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health)
- Bitter Orange [<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/bitter-orange>]  (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health)
- Dietary Supplements for Weight Loss [<https://ods.od.nih.gov/pdf/factsheets/WeightLoss-Consumer.pdf>]
 (National Institutes of Health, Office of Dietary Supplements) - **PDF**

- Dietary Supplements for Weight Loss [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/weight-loss/in-depth/weight-loss/art-20046409?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/healthy-lifestyle/weight-loss/in-depth/weight-loss/art-20046409?p=1>]
- Ephedra [<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/ephedra>]  (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health)
- Hoodia [<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/hoodia>]  (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health)
- Prescription Medications to Treat Overweight & Obesity [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/weight-management/prescription-medications-treat-overweight-obesity>]
 (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/control-de-peso/medicamentos-recetados-tratar-sobrepeso-obesidad>]
- Weight Loss Medicines [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/weight-loss-medicines.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/weight-loss-medicines.html>]
- Weight Loss Surgery: MedlinePlus Health Topic [<https://medlineplus.gov/weightlosssurgery.html>]
 (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/weightlosssurgery.html>]

Living With

- Daily Food and Activity Diary [https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/eat/diary.htm]
 (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)
- Food Portions: Choosing Just Enough for You [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/weight-management/just-enough-food-portions>]
 (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/control-de-peso/cuanto-debo-comer>]
- Nutrition: MedlinePlus Health Topic [<https://medlineplus.gov/nutrition.html>]
 (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/nutrition.html>]
- Some Myths about Nutrition and Physical Activity [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/weight-management/myths-nutrition-physical-activity>]
 (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/control-de-peso/nutricion-perdida-peso-mitos-verdades>]
- Tips for Cutting Calories [<https://www.cdc.gov/healthy-weight-growth/healthy-eating/cutting-calories.html>]
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Tips for Maintaining Healthy Weight [<https://www.cdc.gov/healthy-weight-growth/about/tips-for-balancing-food-activity.html>]
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Weight Loss: 6 Strategies for Success [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/weight-loss/in-depth/weight-loss/art-20047752?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- Weight Loss: Gain Control of Emotional Eating [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/weight-loss/in-depth/weight-loss/art-20047342?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

Related Issues

- Aim for a Healthy Weight: Menus [https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/menuplanner.html]
 (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)

Specifics

- Changing Your Habits for Better Health [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diet-nutrition/changing-habits-better-health>]
 (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/alimentacion-nutricion/como-cambiar-sus-habitos-para-tener-una-mejor-salud>]
- Diets: MedlinePlus Health Topic [<https://medlineplus.gov/diets.html>]
 (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/diets.html>]
- Guide to Behavior Change [https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/behavior.htm]
 (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)

- Guide to Physical Activity [https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/phy_act.htm]  (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)
- How to Handle Food Cravings [<https://www.eatright.org/health/wellness/healthful-habits/how-to-handle-food-cravings>] (Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics)
- Metabolism and Weight Loss: How You Burn Calories [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/weight-loss/in-depth/metabolism/art-20046508?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- Selecting a Weight-Loss Program [https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/wtl_prog.htm]  (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)
- Weight Management and Healthy Living Tips [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/community-health-outreach/healthy-living-tips>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)

Health Check Tools

- Adult BMI Calculator [<https://www.cdc.gov/bmi/adult-calculator/index.html>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cdc.gov/bmi/es/adult-calculator/index.html>]
- Calculate Your BMI [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/calculate-your-bmi>]  (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)
- Calorie Counter [<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/diet-physical-activity/eat-healthy/calorie-counter-calculator.html>] (American Cancer Society)

Videos and Tutorials

- Losing Weight: Brandon's Story [<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/brandons-vd.html>]  (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/teens/brandons-vd.html>]

Test Your Knowledge

- Test Your Knowledge About Healthy Eating [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/quiz/000330_25.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/quiz/000330_86.htm]

Statistics and Research

- FastStats: Obesity and Overweight [<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/obesity-overweight.htm>] (National Center for Health Statistics)
- Obesity and Cancer [<https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/risk-factors/obesity.html>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/es/risk-factors/obesity.html>]

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Body Mass Index [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Body+Mass+Index%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Weight Loss [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?intr=%22weight+loss%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Weight Reduction Programs [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?intr=%22Weight+Reduction+Programs%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Effects of 4:3 Intermittent Fasting on Eating Behaviors and Appetite Hormones:... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40733010>]
- Article: Gut Microbiota Shifts After a Weight Loss Program in Adults with... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40732984>]

• Article: Implementation and Evaluation of a Weight Management Programme for Overweight or...
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40717933>]

- Weight Control -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Weight+Reduction+Programs%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+OR+%22Body+Weight+Maintenance%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+OR+%22Weight+Loss%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+AND+%28patient+education+handout%5Bpt%5D+OR+guideline%5Bpt%5D+OR+clinical+trial%5Bpt%5D%29++NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Reference Desk

- Definitions of Health Terms: Nutrition [<https://medlineplus.gov/definitions/nutritiondefinitions.html>]  (National Library of Medicine)

Find an Expert

- Find a Nutrition Expert [<https://www.eatright.org/find-a-nutrition-expert>] (Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics)
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov>] 

Children

- Keeping Portions Under Control (For Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/portions.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/portions.html>]

Teenagers

- 5 Ways to Reach a Healthy Weight [<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/weight-tips.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/teens/weight-tips.html>]
- Take Charge of Your Health: A Guide for Teenagers [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/weight-management/take-charge-health-guide-teenagers>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [[https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/control-de-peso/hazte-cargo-salud](https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/control-de-peso?dkrd=/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/control-de-peso/hazte-cargo-salud)]

Women

- The Reality of Menopause Weight Gain [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/womens-health/in-depth/menopause-weight-gain/art-20046058?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/healthy-lifestyle/womens-health/in-depth/menopause-weight-gain/art-20046058?p=1>]

Adults

- Stopping Middle-Age Spread: Maintain a Healthy Weight as You Age [<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2024/10/stopping-middle-age-spread>]  (National Institutes of Health)
Also in Spanish [<https://salud.nih.gov/recursos-de-salud/nih-noticias-de-salud/como-frenar-el-aumento-de-peso-de-la-mediana-edad>]

Patient Handouts

- Body mass index [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007196.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007196.htm>]
- Can you boost your metabolism? [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000893.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000893.htm>]
- Diet for rapid weight loss [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000885.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000885.htm>]
- Losing weight after pregnancy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000586.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000586.htm>]

- Managing your weight with healthy eating [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000330.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000330.htm>]
- Portion size [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000337.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000337.htm>]
- Snacks for adults [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000338.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000338.htm>]
- Ways to burn more calories every day [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000894.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000894.htm>]
- Weight loss and alcohol [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000889.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000889.htm>]
- Weight-loss medicines [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000346.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000346.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

- [Body mass index](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007196.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007196.htm>]
- [Can you boost your metabolism?](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000893.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000893.htm>]
- [Diet for rapid weight loss](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000885.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000885.htm>]
- [Healthy habits for weight loss](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000733.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000733.htm>]
- [Losing weight after pregnancy](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000586.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000586.htm>]
- [Managing your weight with healthy eating](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000330.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000330.htm>]
- [Portion size](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000337.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000337.htm>]
- [Snacks for adults](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000338.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000338.htm>]
- [Ways to burn more calories every day](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000894.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000894.htm>]
- [Weight gain after quitting smoking: What to do](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000811.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000811.htm>]
- [Weight loss and alcohol](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000889.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000889.htm>]
- [Weight-loss medicines](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000346.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000346.htm>]

Related Health Topics

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Eating Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/eatingdisorders.html>]

Exercise and Physical Fitness [<https://medlineplus.gov/exerciseandphysicalfitness.html>]

Nutrition [<https://medlineplus.gov/nutrition.html>]

Obesity [<https://medlineplus.gov/obesity.html>]

Weight Loss Surgery [<https://medlineplus.gov/weightlosssurgery.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Weight Control* is the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov>]

Other Languages

Find health information in languages other than English [<https://medlineplus.gov/languages/weightcontrol.html>] on *Weight Control*

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