



DIETARY AND LIFESTYLE PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET (DLPIS18v2)

Eating a balanced diet with the right foods can help keep you healthy now and later in life.

Which foods are especially healthy? — Foods that are especially healthy include:

- **Fruits and Vegetables** – Eating fruits and vegetables can help prevent heart disease, stroke, and certain types of cancer. Try to eat fruits and vegetables at each meal and for snacks. If you do not have fresh fruits and vegetables, you can eat frozen or canned ones instead, but select those stored in their own natural juices without any added sugar. It is recommended to eat at least 2½ servings of vegetables and 2 servings of fruits each day.
- **Foods with Fiber** – Eating foods with abundant fiber can help prevent heart disease and strokes. Fiber can also help control your blood sugar. Foods that have a lot of fiber include vegetables, fruits, beans, nuts, oatmeal, and some breads and cereals. Review nutrition labels. It is recommended to eat 25 to 36 grams of fiber daily.
- **Foods with Calcium and Vitamin D** – Babies, children, and adults need calcium and vitamin D to help keep their bones strong and to help prevent osteoporosis from developing in adults. Osteoporosis is a condition that causes bones to become thin and break more easily than usual. Different foods and drinks have calcium and vitamin D in them. People who do not get enough calcium and vitamin D in their diet might need to take a supplement.
- **Protein** – Bump up your protein intake to reduce hunger and to preserve lean mass. Protein intake that amounts to approximately 25-30% of your total daily calories has been shown to help one's body utilize up to 80-100 calories more per day than a lower protein diet. However, the most important contribution of protein to weight loss, is its ability to reduce the appetite as it is more satiating than both fats and carbs. You can calculate what 25% of protein equates to by multiplying your total daily calorie intake by 0.075 (for example: 2000 calories X 0.075 = 150 grams of protein). The best sources of protein are meats, fish, eggs, and dairy products. There are also some plants that are high in protein, such as quinoa, legumes, tofu, and nuts.
- **Keep in Mind** – Too much of any food can be a bad thing, even if it is a healthy food. Eggs are a healthy food but consuming 20 eggs daily would cause health issues. This same argument can be made for any food.

What About Fats? — There are different types of fats. Some types of fats are better for your body than others. Trans-fats are especially unhealthy; therefore, avoid eating foods with high amounts of them. They are found in margarines, many fast foods, and some store-bought baked goods. Trans-fats can raise your cholesterol level and your chance of developing heart disease. The type of polyunsaturated fats found in fish have been shown by research to be healthy and can reduce your chances of developing heart disease. Recent research also suggests that monounsaturated fats and saturated fats do not seem

to have much effect on your chances of developing heart disease. When you cook with oils, use ones with some healthier fats, such as olive oil and canola oil.

How Many Calories Do I Need Each Day? — The number of calories you need daily depends on your weight, height, age, sex, and activity level. Your primary care provider (PCP), and/or your Express Health Systems' (EHS) clinician, can tell you how many calories you should eat each day. If you are trying to lose weight, you should consume fewer calories than your body utilizes per day. Women, that maintain normal physical activity levels, that are attempting to lose weight should consume **1,200-1,500** calories daily. Men, that maintain normal activity levels, that are attempting to lose weight should consume **1,600-1,800** calories daily. On the other hand, women attempting to maintain their current body weight usually require **1,600-2,000** calories daily, while many adult men attempting to maintain their current body weight generally require 2,000-2,500 calories daily. These are general guidelines only and may vary depending on body-size, activity levels, and additional factors. Please discuss in greater details with an EHS clinician during your visit.

What About Medication? — Weight loss medication works by reducing your appetite and/or by changing the way you digest food. If you do not change your lifestyle, your weight loss program **WILL FAIL**, even if you are taking an appetite suppressant medication. One must decrease calories consumed daily and/or increase the amount of physical activity performed daily to lose weight. **DO NOT ALTER THE DOSE OF MEDICATION PRESCRIBED TO YOU, AND DO NOT GIVE YOUR PRESCRIPTION TO ANYONE ELSE.** Do not take anyone else's medication. When weight loss medications are taken as directed, most individuals generally do not experience serious side effects. Common minor side effects of appetite suppressant medications include dry mouth, jitteriness, and/or headache. These side effects often subside within a short timeframe. If you experience more serious problems, such as nervousness, rash, chest pain, and/or racing or irregular heartbeat, you should discontinue the medication immediately, and notify your PCP as well as your clinician with EHS. You should not take these medications while pregnant or breastfeeding. Other contraindications exist as well. Discuss all contraindications with your EHS clinician and with your PCP. **PLEASE NOTE:** Some of appetite suppressant medications, such as phentermine, may cause a falsely positive methamphetamine result on certain types of basic screening drug test. Upon request EWLC will provide a letter confirming this fact. Do realize that further lab testing can be performed to differentiate between prescription appetite suppressants and illegal amphetamines/methamphetamines. EHS is not a lab and does not perform such testing.

Obesity increases a person's risk of developing many health problems. A few examples are: Diabetes, High Blood Pressure, High Cholesterol, Cancer, Heart Disease (including heart attacks), Stroke, Asthma, and Sleep Apnea (a disorder with which you stop breathing for short periods of time while sleeping). Studies also show that people who are obese have a shorter lifespan than people who maintain a healthy weight. Studies also prove that the risk of death has a direct correlation to unhealthy body weight.

DAILY EXERCISE should be one of your highest priorities. Exercise is a critical part of success in losing weight and maintaining a healthy weight. **THE DURATION AND FREQUENCY IS THE KEY.** The intensity is less important. Exercise 5-7 days each week, for 30-60 minutes per exercise session. Exercise at a comfortable pace without huffing and puffing, and without losing your ability to speak clearly and in full sentences. Raise your heart rate to 130-140 beats per minute while exercising. Two 30-minute sessions equal 1 hour of exercise, but four 15-minute sessions do not. Aerobic exercises are recommended for weight loss. This means the heart rate needs to be increased and maintained while exercising. Weightlifting and floor exercises, such as sit-ups and pushups, are not essential for weight loss, although

they can help strengthen muscles and increase muscle mass. ***RECOMMENDED EXERCISES*** for general weight loss include: WALKING, CYCLING, SWIMMING and/or WATER AEROBICS. Discuss with your PCP, and your EHS clinician, exactly what exercise option is safe for you to perform. Regular exercise burns calories, lowers blood pressure, lowers cholesterol, lowers blood sugar, slows or prevents osteoporosis, increases metabolism and energy levels, reduces feelings of stress and depression, keeps excess weight off, helps you sleep better, increases insulin sensitivity, and more! Prior to starting an exercise program, you should have an in-person evaluation by your primary care provider (PCP). Then begin exercise only as approved by your PCP.

What can I do to prevent the problems caused by being obese? — Along with weight-loss, you can improve your health and reduce your risks if you:

- **Become more active and obtain adequate rest** – Many types of physical activity can help, including walking. You can start with a few minutes a day and add more time as you become stronger and more tolerant. Everyone needs at least 8 hours of rest (sleep) daily. Chronic lack of rest can make weight loss more difficult.
- **Improve your diet** – No single diet turns out to be better than any other. It is healthy to have regular mealtimes and smaller portions and not to skip meals. ***AVOID CARBONATED DRINKS***, sweets, and processed snack foods. Never drink more than 1 regular sized carbonated drink per week. If possible do not drink ANY carbonated drinks ever.
- **Quit smoking** – Some people start eating more after they stop smoking, so try to make healthy food choices. Even if it increases your appetite, quitting smoking is still one of the best things you can do to improve your health.
- **Limit alcohol intake** – Consume no more than 1 alcoholic drink each day if you are a woman, and no more than 2 if you are a man. People who drink a small amount of alcohol each day may have a lower chance of getting heart disease. However, drinking alcohol excessively may lead to problems including liver disease, dependence/abuse, and certain types of cancer.

In conclusion, to lose weight, you must consume fewer calories, and increase your activity level. You can walk, dance, garden, or even just move your arms while sitting. The important thing to remember is that you increase the number of calories you burn by increasing your activity level while consuming fewer calories. You must also maintain that extra activity and the appropriate amount of calorie intake to have positive results. If you diet for a short period of time, or increase your activity for a short-while, you may lose weight for a short time. However, you will regain the weight lost if you resume old unhealthy eating and exercise habits. *Weight loss is about changing your eating and exercise habits for good.* Begin by making small reasonable changes and stick with them. It is never too late to begin!

Note that much of this document has been based on the Patient Education module Titled “Diet and health (The Basics)” [Written by the doctors and editors at UpToDate](#). EHS has added some additional information to this form. See the original unedited UpToDate Patient Education module Titled “Diet and health (The Basics)” within your Patient Portal.