

# Your Best Weight

## What motivates you to learn about weight loss

The motivation might come from your physician or other health care providers who suggested you lose weight to prevent or manage your health conditions, or you may be interested in weight loss for your own personal reasons such as body image. Whatever your motivation is, it is important to choose an approach that supports health and wellness as some weight loss approaches cause more harm than good.



*Photo from Unsplash.com*

It is not realistic and accurate to judge your health based solely on your weight. Many people with various health conditions are within normal weight or even underweight. Similarly, there are many healthy overweight individuals who eat a well-balanced diet and are physically active. Increased focus on weight loss has contributed to fat phobia, body shame, weight discrimination, and diet cycling. The diet culture has not made us thinner!

## Weight Gain

Obesity is a chronic and complex disease that is influenced by our genetics, brain function, hormones, environment, and our lifestyle. Weight management is not based on commonly promoted ideas like will power, or “calories in calories out”! Weight is impacted by a large variety of factors.

Weight gain could be a sign and outcome of another physical condition such as:

- ✓ Sleep issues (sleep apnea, insomnia)
- ✓ Hormone imbalances (e.g., thyroid issues, polycystic ovaries)
- ✓ Medications (e.g., antipsychotics, contraceptives, etc.)



Weight loss, on the other hand, may occur in mental health conditions like anxiety, depression, or due to emotional eating.

We encourage you to aim for your best weight to support overall health and wellness. Your best weight is the weight that you can achieve while living the healthiest lifestyle you enjoy. Your healthcare provider can help you to figure out your best weight.

## Benefits of Weight Loss

Health benefits of weight loss may depend on your chosen approach and strategies rather than the change in weight. You may experience improved blood sugar, blood cholesterol, blood pressure, sleep quality, or other health factors. When making [healthy dietary](#) and lifestyle changes celebrate your healthier self rather than the number on the weighing scale.

## Weight management strategies, which can be incorporated within your lifestyle

### Food and Diet

Our body is a complex system, and our metabolism is not as simple as “calories in, calories out.” It is a myth that the less you eat and the more activity you do, the thinner you will be.

For example, you may have noticed that members of the same family, eating the same food would metabolize it differently and one may gain weight and have weight concerns while others do not.

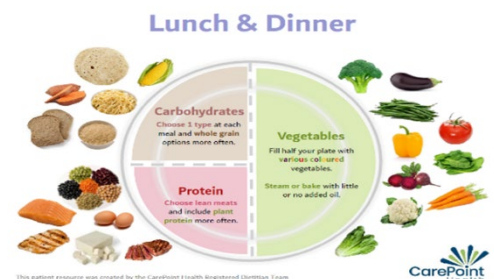


There have been many popular weight loss trends and fad diets that claim to be the magic diet for permanent weight loss. Unfortunately, restrictive diets do not work and are not sustainable; they usually cause temporary weight loss that includes loss of muscle mass and decreased metabolism. If a diet or lifestyle change is not sustainable in the long term, then you may want to reconsider the approach you are taking.

## How to Make Sustainable Healthy Lifestyle Changes

Develop and follow your individualized healthy eating plan that considers your nutritional needs and wellbeing, food preferences and accessible foods by considering these tips:

- Follow The [Canada Food Guide](#) well balanced plate at each meal. Fill half of your plate with colourful vegetables, one-quarter with protein (e.g., fish, chicken, turkey, beef, eggs, beans, lentils, soy products), and one-quarter with high fibre carbohydrates (e.g., whole grains, potato, corn). Remember a healthy diet is a well-balanced diet, and there are no specific foods which cause weight loss.



- Start your day with a balanced breakfast that includes high fibre carbohydrates (eg. steel cut oats, whole grain toast), and protein (e.g., eggs, cheese, nut butter)
- Choose healthy snacks between meals including fruits, vegetables, plain yogurt, whole grain crackers with hummus or cheese, or a handful of unsalted nuts.
- Limit sugary drinks and make water your preferred drink.
- Choose whole foods that are not processed and avoid foods with added fat and sugar.
- In our current environment and culture, food is readily available; this makes it challenging to make healthy food choices and avoid overeating. Be mindful of environmental factors that help or hinder your healthy lifestyle efforts.
- Listen to your physical hunger and fullness cues to determine when and how much to eat rather than external triggers such as break time at work, weight loss diet plans, TV food commercials, emotions, and boredom. Intuitive eating and mindful eating are your best inner guide for portion control.
- Be aware of modifiable factors, which can undermine your efforts to achieve a healthy body weight like stress, sleep, and your medications.
- Take steps to managing your stress by reflecting on if you experience stress on a regular basis. If you do experience regular stress, what causes it, and how does it impact you? Be sure to take time for self-care that will enable you to manage your stress well. This can include going for a walk in nature, meditation, colouring, or any other action that is pleasing to you.
- Sleep can also impact your weight. Lack of sleep can alter hormones in your brain that increase the drive to eat. This drive can reduce your resilience for unwanted eating habits. Aim to get 7-9 hours of sleep nightly.
- Some medications cause weight gain. Common medications include antipsychotics and mood stabilizers, antidepressants, antihyperglycemics (diabetes medications), antihypertensives (blood pressure), and corticosteroids. Speak to your pharmacist or doctor if you think certain medications may be contributing to weight gain or difficulty losing weight.
- A sedentary lifestyle is another modifiable factor of weight. Studies show that when you are sedentary, you become more sensitive to food cues in your environment. Check out the movement and exercise tips below.



## Movement and Exercise

Twenty percent of your daily calorie expenditure is from activities of daily living and physical activity. Physical activity has numerous physical and mental health benefits even in the absence of weight loss.



## Tips:

The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines suggest that adults must aim for:

### Moderate to Vigorous Intensity Aerobic (Cardiovascular) Activity

At least 150 minutes per week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more



### Add muscle and bone strengthening activities

2 days per week (using major muscle groups)

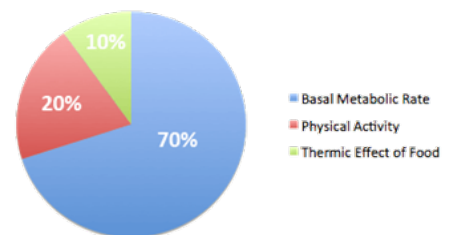


Try to be physically active throughout the day by:

- Limiting your sedentary time by walking inside or outside your home when possible.
- Playing active games with your kids and grandkids.
- Joining a fitness class or gym.
- Trying online exercise videos at home.
- Doing sports and activities that you enjoy.

Listen to your body and respect your physical limitations. A lot of people injure themselves when pushing their bodies too hard during vigorous exercise sessions or doing the activity incorrectly.

Check out more tips and information on [physical activity by clicking here](#)



## Medications

Your healthcare provider may recommend a weight loss medication to complement behavioural changes. There are three medications approved to support weight loss in Canada. Any other advertised weight loss medications and supplements that are sold online and without a prescription do not have enough evidence to support their efficacy, are not approved by Health Canada, and may cause more harm than benefit.



### 1. Contrave® (naltrexone and bupropion):

This was originally a medication to help with depression, and dependency on alcohol, opioids, and cigarettes. This oral tablet also helps to manage food cravings.



2. Saxenda® (liraglutide):

GLP-1 (or glucagon-like peptide-1) is a natural hormone in your body that controls appetite and food intake. This injectable medication can help with reducing appetite and food portions along with improving blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol.

3. Xenical® (orlistat):

This oral capsule reduces the absorption of the fatty foods that you eat.

These medications may have gastrointestinal side effects for some people that should be considered and discussed with their health care providers.

## Bariatric Surgery

Surgery is an invasive approach that may be an option for some people to manage obesity. Your healthcare provider can help you consider the eligibility criteria, benefits versus risks, and side effects of this approach to help you make an informed decision.



There are three surgical approaches available in Canada:

1. Adjustable Gastric Banding: A gastric band that is wrapped around the stomach and reduces the volume of the stomach pouch and the amount of food that a person can eat. This procedure is not very popular recently due to poor long-term results.
2. Sleeve Gastrectomy: during surgery, most of the stomach is removed and a banana shape “sleeve” is developed which reduces the amount of food that can be consumed.
3. Gastric Bypass: also known as Roux-en-Y (pronounced: Roux-en-Y) gastric bypass creates a small stomach pouch by stapling the larger part of the stomach and connecting the small stomach pouch to the small intestine.

A Registered Dietitian can help you to make healthy lifestyle changes to support your weight loss journey during one-on-one sessions or through attending the [My Best Weight program](#) at CarePoint Health. Ask your family physician to connect you with a dietitian at CarePoint Health.



## Resources and References

Given below are additional resources for evidence-based information to help you make healthy food choices and lifestyle changes that will support you in reaching your best weight and the healthiest version of yourself.

Obesity Canada: <https://obesitycanada.ca/obesity/>

Eating well for weight and health:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-eating-well-for-weight-and-health.pdf>

Diabetes Canada physical activity resources: <https://www.diabetes.ca/resources/tools---resources?Categories=EXER&ResourceToolType=&SearchText=&Sort=alwaysontop&Page=1>

Introduction to Exercise for Osteoarthritis:

<https://arthritis.ca/living-well/2020/introduction-to-exercise-for-osteoarthritis>

Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines: <https://csepguidelines.ca/>

My Weight What to Know: <https://myweightwhattoknow.com/>

