

TEN STEPS TO A HEALTHY WEIGHT

Here are 10 safe, proven **principles** that not only will bring down the weight, but will reward you with a healthier, happier life as well.

- 1. Don't go on a 'diet'** - Change your eating habits-permanently! Dieting is merely a temporary interruption to your normal eating habits - the very ones that may have caused a weight problem in the first place. You don't need a 'new diet,' you need a new dietary lifestyle.
- 2. Eat a good breakfast** - A good breakfast boosts your energy, increases your attention span, and heightens your sense of well-being. Studies have now linked eating a healthy breakfast to less chronic disease, longer life, and better health. Children who eat a good breakfast often do better in school. So jump-start your day with a whole grain cereal, whole grain toast, and a couple servings of fresh fruits. Your energy level will then be high all morning.
- 3. Break the snack habit** - The calories you get from snacking can add up to an extra meal - a big one at that. One study showed Western women tended to snack 400-500 calories per day. At the rate of 500 calories per day, 7 days a week, totalling 3500 calories, that means it is possible to gain about ½ kg a week on snacks alone.

Many people are able to control their weight just by kicking the snack habit. Eating adequate meals high in complex carbohydrates and fibre will provide you with the steady energy you need to make it from one meal to the next.

- 4. Eat mainly unrefined and unprocessed whole plant foods** - Build your diet around fruits, vegetables, grains, beans [legumes] and other natural foods. They are high in fibre, low in dangerous types of fat and will fill you up with fewer calories.

The NHS and others recommend that we eat 5-8 servings of fruit and vegetables every day. One of the fruits should be high in Vitamin C and one of the vegetables high in Vitamin A.

They also recommend eating 6 servings of beans and grains every day. A serving is one piece of fruit or slice of bread or a half-cup of a food. This will reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer, and obesity.

Unrefined foods such as olives, corn and sesame seeds, do provide fat without getting it in excess amounts as is so easily done when using oil.

Sugar as found in fruits is not nearly so concentrated as refined sugars which is used in cooking or the making of sweets, biscuits, etc.

Whole-wheat bread as contrasted with white flour bread, brown rice rather than white rice, are other examples of unrefined foods. Refining of foods concentrates calories. You would have to eat a lot of ears of corn to get as many calories as is in one tablespoonful of oil. Also one peach provides 30-40 calories but when consumed in the form of canned peaches in sugar water, 2 peach halves will provide 90 calories.

- 5. Reduce oils, butters, dressings and other fats** - Avoid meats high in fat, cholesterol, cooking and salad oils, sauces, dressings, and shortening - all high in calories and have no fibre at all. Use spreads and nuts sparingly. Avoid frying; sauté instead with a little water in a nonstick pan. Try new low-fat, easy-to-prepare recipes.
- 6. Drink water** - Our bodies consist of about 60% water. Water is necessary for almost every function of the body. We need to be aware of our body's needs and provide for those needs. Often feelings of tiredness and hunger are in reality thirst-messages. So, drink 8 or more glasses of water per day. Most people don't drink enough water. They drink more soft drinks, beer, coffee, tea and other beverages than they do water. That means they are getting a lot of calories but not much nutrition. Drinking calorie-loaded beverages is one sure recipe for gaining weight. A good thing to do is to switch to water – it's the slender person's drink of choice. When you have the urge to eat between meals, drink water. Often, we think we are hungry, and eat - when in reality, though we may not have a thirsty feeling, the body is in need of water.
- 7. Exercise daily** - A regular exercise programme helps you lose weight by boosting your metabolism and strengthening your muscles. It also increases your energy and endurance and lifts your spirits. Exercise is a high-yield investment. Walk after meals (It's best not to linger around the kitchen). Short walks after meals aids digestion and helps us keep a positive attitude. For general fitness, 30 minutes a day is a good goal. But people who need to lose weight must aim higher. Do an hour a day. This could be brisk walking or gardening.

- 8. No harmful substances** - Allow no harmful substances into your body, such as alcohol, tobacco, caffeine and unnecessary drugs. These are addictive, expensive substances that either add calories to an overburdened body or increase our risk of illness.
- 9. Eat 3 regular meals daily** - Eat 3 regular meals a day about 5-6 hours apart, with no snacks between. A bigger breakfast and noon meal, with a smaller meal at night, will promote better sleep and give the stomach a good rest. Studies show that calories eaten in late afternoon or evening stay with us more than calories eaten earlier in the day. In the evening, we are generally less active and don't need more food and calories. Some people find that fasting from food for a day every week or so may also be beneficial.
Remember, that sedentary work, television, computers, the Internet, and the easy availability of high-calorie foods are creating not only obese adults, but also super-fat children. These children are pre-exposed to a host of related illnesses as well as serious psychological problems. So set a good example. Good health is a family affair.
- 10. Trust in God for help** - Courage and faith in the healing power of God is of great importance. Most of us lack what it takes to always choose the best foods or eat them in the right quantity. Our loving Lord is yearning to assist us in gaining the victory over self. Claim the mighty promises in the Bible, and mighty things can be accomplished! The apostle Paul says it well, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Phil. 4:13.