

Family Health Care

# Counselor

## Healthy Weight

Maintain a healthy weight to promote heart health and enable better management of cholesterol, diabetes, and osteoarthritis symptoms. A weight loss needs only to be a modest one to generate health benefits. A change in habits may be required, but if you view it as a long-term goal and start slow, you will succeed!



## Health Benefits of Weight Control

This document is intended to be a reliable source of information. However, it is not a substitute for professional advice. We recommend that you consult a physician or a pharmacist to understand how this information applies to any specific case.

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# Health Benefits of Weight Control

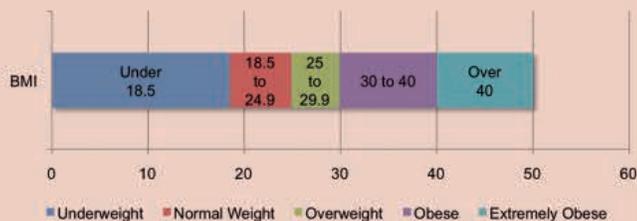
## Measuring Weight

A look in the mirror is probably all you need to determine whether you are overweight. People often focus on numbers to gauge whether they are at a healthy weight, but because individuals vary in shapes, types, and sizes, no one method of measuring weight is perfect. For instance, a very tall or very short person will have a body mass index (BMI) that does not reflect their true health. When you consider that muscle weighs more than fat, athletes will potentially weigh more than the average person due to their greater muscle-to-fat ratio. Often, more than one method of weight measure is required to give the most accurate picture of your weight and health.

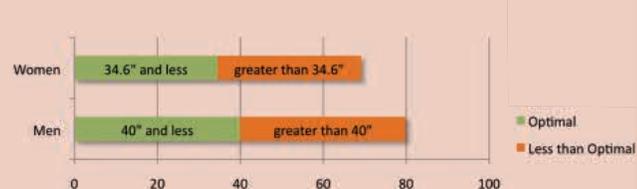
The following are weight measuring methods you can incorporate to maintain a healthy weight:

- Height and weight charts – These are great for tracking development in children.
- Bathroom scale – A great tool for measuring how much you weigh.
- Body mass index or BMI – Considered an accurate measure of weight, the BMI is simply a figure that expresses your “weight divided by height<sup>2</sup>”. The measure is calculated using kilograms and meters and web-based BMI calculators eliminate the need for you to do any math.
- Waist circumference – This measurement is easy to perform and will give you a good idea about potential weight problems.
- Waist-to-hip ratio – To calculate, divide your waist measurement by your hip measurement.
- Calipers – These are tools used by professionals to measure body fat.
- Hydrostatic weight tanks – These specialized tanks enable the calculation of body fat based on the volume of water displaced.

### Body Mass Index



### Waist Circumference



### Waist-to-Hip Ratio

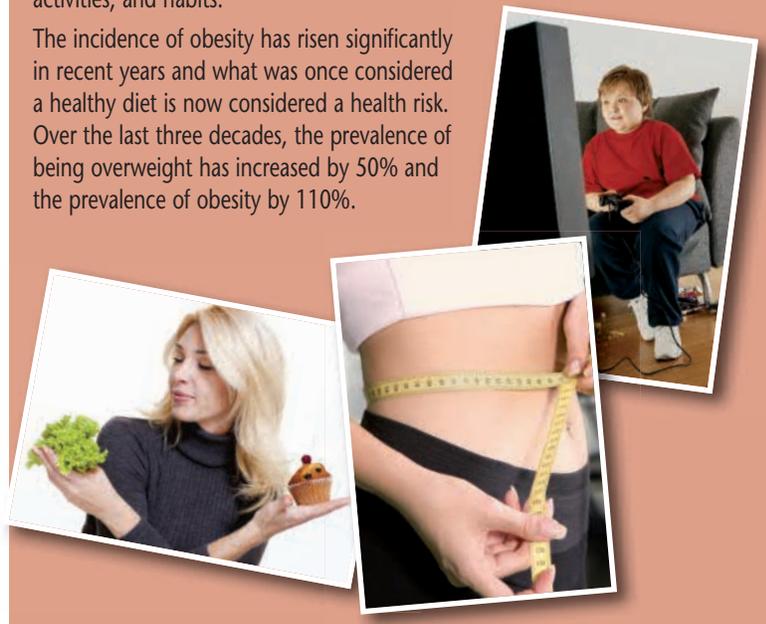


## How Common is Obesity?

Obesity is defined as being excessively fat. It occurs when your energy intake exceeds your energy expenditure, and the resulting excess is stored as fat in your body. Over half of Canadians are overweight. One third of that group fall within the obese category and 5% are categorized as extremely obese.

Children and teens are not exempt from the obesity epidemic. About 16% of children and teens are overweight or obese, and an additional 15% are at risk of being overweight. Research has shown that if both parents are obese, children have an 80% chance of also being obese due to similar diets, activities, and habits.

The incidence of obesity has risen significantly in recent years and what was once considered a healthy diet is now considered a health risk. Over the last three decades, the prevalence of being overweight has increased by 50% and the prevalence of obesity by 110%.



## Why is Obesity a Present-Day Problem?

Obesity has not always been as widespread as it is today. With the incidence continuing to rise, some have theorized the reason points directly at many of today's modern conveniences. Historically, access to and preparation of food has been difficult. Also, food choices were more limited and physical activity was an essential part of work and play.

Today, more people live in urban areas, enjoy greater incomes, and take advantage of technology to live more comfortable and sedentary lifestyles. There is no one reason for the increased numbers of overweight and obese individuals, but rather, several factors have combined to contribute to the problem, including:

- More food choices.
- Larger portions.
- Increased consumption of sugar, especially in sugar-sweetened beverages.
- Increased consumption of calorie-rich foods including processed and convenience foods.
- Decreased physical activity at work and at home.
- Leisure activities less likely to involve exercise, e.g., watching television.

# Health Benefits of Weight Control

## Cardiovascular Health and Weight

It is the combination of being overweight, having high cholesterol levels, and having high blood pressure that increases your risk for heart attack and stroke. Each factor can magnify the effect of the others.

To gain a better understanding of this, first consider that extra body fat contributes to both high cholesterol levels and high blood pressure. The reason for this two-fold impact is fat cells manufacture inflammatory substances that increase the risk for atherosclerosis – the thickening of blood vessel walls with fatty deposits. Mid-section fat, or “spare-tire” fat, seems especially able to stimulate atherosclerosis. However, the fat that has the biggest effect on cardiovascular health is “tummy” fat or fat that is deposited under the muscles of the mid-section and lies over the internal organs in the abdomen.

High cholesterol levels lead to atherosclerosis, which in turn, lead to high blood pressure. High blood pressure means your cardiovascular system needs to work harder to move blood through your body. Thus, health risks are significantly increased for individuals who are overweight.

The good news is, every inch and pound you can lose will add years to your life by reducing your risk for heart attack and stroke. A weight loss of 10 to 15 pounds can make a big difference!

## Your Weight Loss Goal

Your initial weight loss goal is to balance the calories consumed against calories burned. To lose weight, you need to reduce your calories consumed or increase your calories used in physical activity. Aim to achieve moderate weight loss, that is, one to two pounds per week. Remember that even a 10 pound loss will generate many health benefits.

Changes in your lifestyle may be required, but they can be gradual. Focus on ones that you can maintain over time. For example, parking a block further from your destination and walking the extra distance. Moderate activities that you enjoy are a good idea, as are non-strenuous ones like yoga, walking, and swimming. A simple plan to carry out is to count your daily steps with the goal or reaching and maintaining 10,000 steps each day.

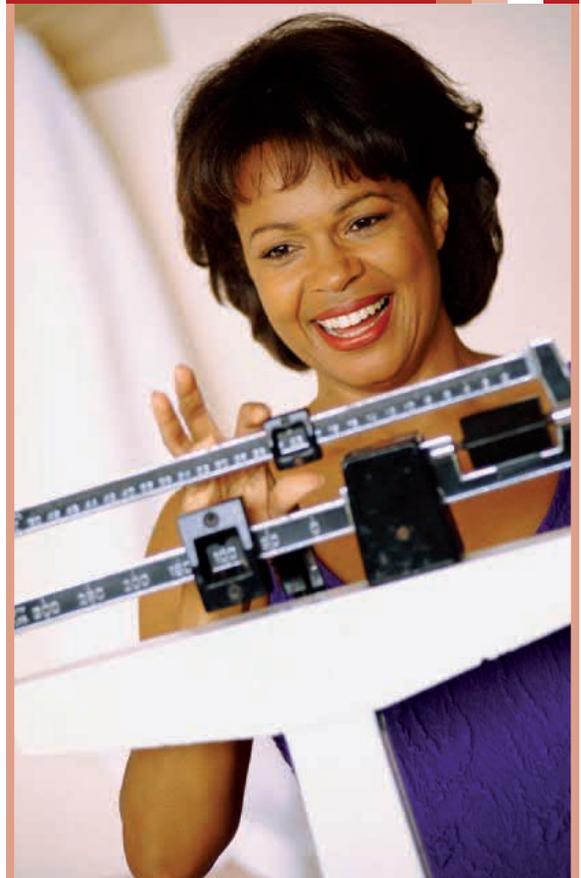
At any one time, one half of women and one third of men in Canada are trying to lose weight, but only one in five are incorporating increased physical activity into their weight loss efforts. A key to successful weight loss is to remember that there are no magic foods, magic combinations of foods, magic weight loss remedies, or magic timing of foods! You need to burn more calories than you consume!

## Weight Control with Diabetes

Diabetes is a life-long condition that occurs when your body cannot metabolize glucose or sugar. The condition develops when your pancreas is unable to produce insulin or produces insufficient amounts. When this occurs, glucose remains unabsorbed and circulating within your bloodstream, eventually to cause complications such as: blood vessel damage, impaired circulation, cardiovascular problems, kidney disease, and diminished eyesight. With type 1 diabetes, the pancreas produces no insulin. With type 2 diabetes, the body is producing insulin, but the hormone does not perform the job it is supposed to or the amount produced is not enough.

Being overweight is one of the most important risk factors for type 2 diabetes. If you have other risk factors for diabetes, such as a family history, studies have shown that by maintaining a healthy weight you may avoid developing the condition. Also, if you do become diabetic, you have better control of the condition and fewer complications if you are not overweight.

With excess weight, insulin needs to work harder to metabolize glucose. When insulin is unable to work normally, insulin resistance can occur. Excess weight, especially in the mid-section, seems to be the greatest risk for diabetes.



## Ask Your Helpful FHCP Pharmacist

**Provided by Marie Berry, Your  
Family Health Care Pharmacist**

**Q. What do weight loss pills contain?**

A. At one time most weight loss pills contained amphetamines, but due to adverse effects, abuse, and addiction, these formulations are no longer available. Some of today's non-prescription products contain vitamins, fibre, and herbal ingredients – often ones that cause stimulation. Prescription weight loss products are available, including sibutramine, which works through the nervous system, and orlistat, which prevents fat absorption in the bowel. Unfortunately, weight loss pills have limited results and are usually recommended to be used in combination with dietary changes and increased physical activity.

**Q. Do any drugs cause weight gain?**

A. Drugs used to treat psychosis or depression are often associated with weight gain, and the resulting weight gain can lead to further psychosis or depression. Some anti-seizure medications such as valproic acid and carbamazepine, drugs used to treat diabetes, and steroids like prednisone can cause weight gain. If you have noticed a recent weight gain, ask your Family Health Care Pharmacist to review your medication profile for any offending drugs – an alternative or dosage adjustment may be necessary.

**Q. Is it true that eating after 8 pm will result in weight gain?**

A. The type and amount of food you eat is more important than the time of day that you eat. Your body doesn't differentiate between food eaten at 8 am or 8 pm. You want to eat healthy and maintain a good level of physical activity in order to keep a healthy weight. If you eat later, you may be susceptible to heartburn. The same goes with spicy, fatty, or large quantities of food. The heartburn or gastro esophageal reflux (GERD) can interfere with your sleep but it won't mean a weight gain.

## A Healthy Position Comparing Diets

A normal diet consists of fats, proteins, carbohydrates, and nutrients like vitamins and minerals. Proteins make you feel full and fat contributes to taste. It is the dietary calories that are the key to weight loss, and unfortunately, the average Canadian exceeds the average daily calorie requirements. Consult the following table and track your calories for a day to see how you do!

**Average Daily Calorie Requirements**

Age	Sedentary	Moderate Activity Level	Active Activity Level
19-30 years old	Women: 2000 Men: 2400	Women: 2000 to 2200 Men: 2600-2800	Women: 2400 Men: 3000
19-30 years old	Women: 1800 Men: 2200	Women: 2000 Men: 2400-2600	Women: 2200 Men: 2800-3000
50 years old plus	Women: 1600 Men: 2000	Women: 1800 Men: 2200-2400	Women: 2000- 2200 Men: 2400-2800

The variety of diets is as numerous as the number of people wanting to lose weight. Some diets focus on specific foods, such as the grapefruit diet or the cabbage soup diet; however, these diets may lack balanced nutrition.

When considering a diet, you want to carry out one that does not interfere with your health and any medical condition you may have. A change in dietary habits is needed for any diet to be successful and that includes factoring physical activity into your diet plans. Some diets, such as Weight Watchers, incorporate group support to improve compliance and success.

### Take The Check-Up Challenge

Try playing games of your childhood – jump rope, hop scotch, tag, dodge ball, hide and seek, and musical chairs. Involve your family and friends. You'll enjoy yourself while increasing your physical activity level.

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## Next Month's Feature!

JUNE 2013

### Shingles

Each year, about 130,000 cases of shingles are diagnosed. It is estimated that 95% of Canadians are at risk. Shingles is the reactivation of the chicken pox virus within your body and while the condition itself can be painful, the potential resulting nerve damage can be even more uncomfortable and persistent.

In Next Month's Feature Find out More About:

- The virus that causes shingles.
- Who is affected by shingles.
- Symptoms of shingles.
- Treating and preventing shingles.
- Post-herpetic neuralgia.
- Treating post-herpetic neuralgia.

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