

Obesity: how to lose weight wisely

Why bother to lose weight?

Those who are overweight, whether mildly obese or morbidly obese, have much to gain. You will feel so much better—your self-esteem will return, and it will reduce your risks of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, gall bladder trouble, hiatus hernia, high blood pressure and arthritis, especially of the hips and the knees. Taking your obesity into old age creates many uncomfortable problems.

The two keys to success

- Eat less fattening food (especially fats and alcohol).
- Burn off the calories with exercise.

If we eat more fuel (joules) than we burn, we get fat. Remember that to maintain a steady weight, energy intake must equal energy output.

Fattening foods

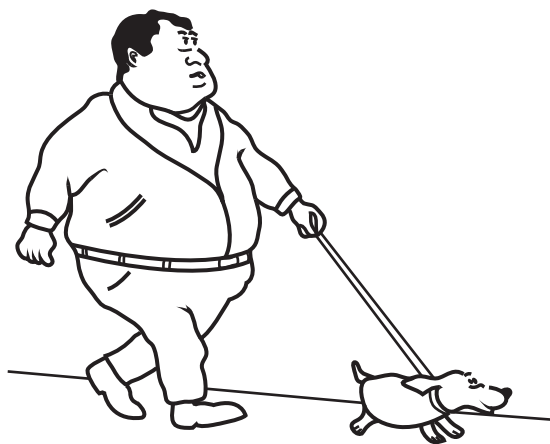
It is essential to cut down on high-calorie foods. These include:

- fats (e.g. oils, butter, margarine, peanut butter and some nuts)
- alcohol
- refined carbohydrates (e.g. sugar, cakes, soft drinks, sweets, biscuits, white bread).

A good rule is to avoid 'white food'—those containing lots of refined sugar or flour. Instead go for *complex carbohydrates*—grains and vegetables.

Physical activity

- A brisk walk for 20 to 30 minutes each day is the most practical exercise. Walk at every opportunity.
- Other activities, such as tennis, swimming, golf and cycling, are a bonus. Play a sport that you enjoy.
- Take stairs instead of lifts.



Walk the dog

A plan that works!

Breakfast

- oatmeal (soaked overnight in water); after cooking, add fresh or dried fruit; serve with fat-reduced milk or yoghurt

or

- muesli (homemade or from a health-food store)—medium serve with fat-reduced milk; perhaps add extra fruit (fresh or dried)
- slice of wholemeal toast with a thin scraping of margarine, spread with Vegemite, Marmite or sugar-free marmalade
- fresh orange juice or herbal tea or black tea/coffee

Morning and afternoon tea

- piece of fruit or vegetable (e.g. carrot or celery)
- freshly squeezed juice or chilled water with fresh lemon

Midday meal

- salad sandwich with wholemeal or multigrain bread and a thin scraping of margarine (for variety use egg, salmon, chicken or cheese fillings)
- drink, as for breakfast

Evening meal

- *Summer (cold)*: lean meat cuts (grilled, hot or cold), poultry (skin removed) or fish; fresh garden salad; slices of fresh fruit
- *Winter (hot)*: lean meat cuts (grilled), poultry (skin removed) or fish; plenty of green, red and yellow vegetables and small potatoes; fruit for sweets

Weight-loss tips

- Have sensible goals: do not 'crash' diet, but have a 3 to 6 month plan to achieve your ideal weight.
- Go for natural foods; avoid junk foods.
- Avoid alcohol, sugary soft drinks and high-calorie fruit juices.
- Strict dieting without exercise fails.
- If you are mildly overweight, eat one-third less than you usually do (only).
- Do not eat biscuits, cakes, buns, etc. between meals (preferably not at all).
- Use high-fibre foods to munch on.
- A small treat once a week may add variety.
- Don't skip meals.
- Avoid seconds and do not eat leftovers.
- Eat slowly—spin out your meal.
- Ask your doctor about medicines that claim to remove weight.