



LOSING THE WEIGHT

Many women find that they are overweight or have gained weight during or after treatment. There are some studies that say that being overweight may increase the chances that breast cancer may come back. We do know that being overweight does increase the chances for other health problems, like heart disease and osteoporosis. If you are overweight, now is the time to take control and do something about it. Others have done it and so can you.

If you think that you are overweight there are three things that you need to do before getting started. The first is to talk with your doctor and see if it is safe for you to start a diet and exercise plan to help you lose weight. The second is to see what your weight is and what weight is a reasonable goal for you. Thirdly, ask yourself why you want to lose the weight. You need to think about and answer the question. It may be helpful to write down all of the reasons that you want to lose the weight. They may help keep you motivated in the future.

There are many ways to determining if you are overweight. One of the easiest is to use the BMI (body mass index). You can find out your BMI by looking at the BMI table (on the last page) or using online BMI calculators (such as <http://nhlbisupport.com/bmi/>)

- A healthy BMI is between 18.5 and 24.9. A BMI of 25 to 29.9 means that you are overweight. A BMI of 30 or more would put you into the obese group, and may put you at greater risk of recurrence as well as other cancers.
- Calculation of metabolic needs: Daily calorie needs for a person can be calculated by multiplying their weight in kilograms (1 kg=2.2 lbs) by 25-35 (low to high) calories. For people with a BMI above 27.5 multiply their weight in kg by 20 to get their daily calorie needs (Obese people should subtract about 500 calories/day from their needs).
- Free online calorie and fitness calculator is available at myfitnesspal.com



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Now you know your weight and BMI. The next thing to do is to see what you really eat and how much activity you have. You can start to look at this by writing down everything that you eat and drink. Look at the labels so you will know how many calories an item has. Total up your calories for each day. Also track how much exercise you do. When you know what you take in and what you burn each day, you can begin.

To lose weight, you must either eat less or work out more, or have a good combination of both. Let's talk about the eating first. It takes 3500 calories to gain one pound. So, if you cut your calories by 100 a day, you would lose about one pound a month. If you also did enough exercise to burn an extra 100 calories a day, then you would lose about 2 pounds a month. If you need to lose a pound a week, then you need to cut your calories and burn 3500 more than usual in a week. (That is 500 calories a day). It is always good to lose the weight over time, not too quickly. By doing this you can slowly change the way you eat and exercise. That way you can make a lifestyle change that you can keep forever. If you lose weight on a crash diet, you are more prone to put it back on again.

- Healthy adults should eat about 0.8 g of protein per kg of body weight, and elderly adults (over 65 years) should eat 0.8-1 g of protein per kg of body weight. Eating enough protein can help protect lean muscle mass, which helps with overall metabolism as well as strength and balance.
- Fluid needs: people need 1 ounce of water for every kg of body weight. I.e.: a person weighing 220 lbs (100 kg) would need 100 ounces of water/day or about 12.5 cups. In addition, people need another 8 ounces for every 30 minutes of activity and another ounce for every ounce of alcohol consumed in a day.



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- If you're often hungry, try filling up on high fiber, high protein, and low fat snacks. Some examples are Triscuit crackers, reduced fat string cheese, fruits and vegetables, low fat yogurt, low fat chocolate milk, egg whites, etc.

Starting a journal to keep up with your progress is always a good plan. That way you can see how you are doing. Write the reasons that you want to lose weight and your current weight in the journal. Track your weight, maybe one time a week. Write down everything that you eat during each day, every drink, meal, and snack. This will help you to know what you have actually eaten. It is easy to forget about a piece of bread here or a handful of pretzels there. Write about your activity. Did you walk, how long, what kind of pace, etc. You can also write about how you are feeling about what you are doing and how you feel about your progress.

- A 10% weight loss over a year is reasonable.
- Weight loss of $\frac{1}{2}$ -2 pounds per week is usually a good range.

There are some very easy diet and activity changes that you can make that will help:

- **Cut out sodas.** They are empty calories (about 100 a can). If you have been drinking one can of soda each day, cutting that can out, means one pound a month difference.
- **Drink water.** You need about 8 cups a day. It is good for your body and also will give you a feeling of being full.
- **Be cautious eating out.** Never supersize. Plan before you go out. Look at the nutrition contents of foods.(see the Eating Healthy tip sheet)
- **Allow yourself some rewards.** If you really love ice cream, plan ahead and have a small portion of low fat ice cream or sorbet.
- **Don't quit!** If you have a bad day, do not quit. Just resolve that you will do better.
- **Take the stairs, not the elevator.**



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- **Park a distance away.** You can get a little more exercise by parking farther away and walking a little faster and farther from your car to the office or store.
- **Get a buddy.** It is always easier to exercise with a friend. Then you have some to talk with and to be accountable to. They may want to lose a few pounds and need encouragement too.

When Do You Need To Seek Help?

Talk with your doctor before starting a weight loss plan. Make sure that your doctor agrees that you need to lose weight and also agrees with your plan. Talk with your doctor about any health conditions that you have that may limit what you should do. Also, ask if your doctor has other ideas about losing weight for you. There may be other health team members that he would like for you to see.

Useful websites:

- http://www.breastcancer.org/tips/nutrition/after_treat/lose_weight/choices
- <http://www.livestrong.com/sscat/weight-loss-strategies/>
- <http://www.webmd.com/diet/obesity/features/17-best-foods-for-dieters#1>
- <http://www.webmd.com/diet/food-fitness-planner/default.htm>



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