

Healthy living

Losing weight the healthy way



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About this booklet

This booklet is for people who need to lose weight and would like to achieve a healthy weight.

The information in this booklet is intended as a guide only. The Heart Foundation encourages people to check with their doctor or other health professionals and seek individual health advice (see *More information* on page 48 of this booklet).

Why does weight matter?

People come in all shapes and sizes and what might be a healthy weight for one person isn't necessarily healthy for another. It's not healthy to be too thin or to carry too much body fat – you need to find the weight that's best for you by checking with your doctor, and then trying to achieve and maintain it.

The problem with carrying too much body fat (medically referred to as being overweight) is that it can increase your risk of a number of health problems. These include:

- coronary heart disease
- diabetes
- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol
- gall bladder disease
- joint problems, e.g. gout, arthritis and joint pain
- sleep problems, e.g. sleep apnoea
- certain types of cancer.

Your risk of developing these health conditions depends not just on your weight, but also on other risk factors that you may have. You can find out more about other risk factors for heart disease in our *How to have a healthy heart* brochure.

Did you know?

In addition to the health problems listed here, overweight people can suffer from a range of psychosocial problems, such as discrimination, social isolation and poor self-esteem.

Remember

Body weight is just one factor that can impact on your health and needs to be considered along with your overall health and wellbeing.



Why do we put on weight?

Body weight is affected by a number of factors, but the two key factors are:

1. the amount of energy (kilojoules) that we put into our bodies from food and drinks
2. the amount of energy (kilojoules) that we use up through physical activity and other daily activities.

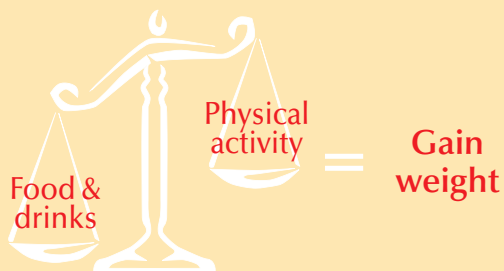
Put simply, it's all about what goes in and what gets used up.

People often get confused by energy and kilojoules – energy and kilojoules are the same thing. Kilojoules are just a measure of energy, in the same way as centimetres or inches are a measure of length. Energy is like fuel in a car – it's what keeps us moving and able to go about our daily activities.

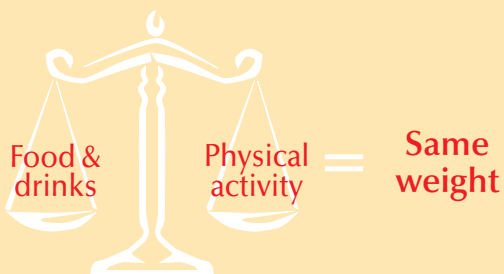
You will gain weight if:

1. you eat and drink more than your body needs – you take in too much energy (kilojoules)
2. you aren't active enough – you don't use up enough energy (kilojoules)
3. if you do both – you eat and drink too much and are not active enough.

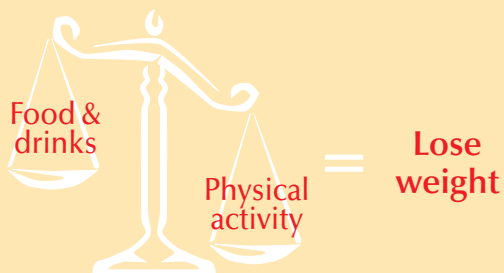
Achieving a healthy weight is a real balancing act.
It works like this:



If the amount of energy (kilojoules) you take into your body through food and drinks is more than you are using up through physical activity and daily activities, then you will gain weight.



If you take in the same amount of energy (kilojoules) through food and drinks that you are using up through physical activity and daily activities, then your weight will stay the same.



If the amount of energy (kilojoules) you take in through food and drinks is less than you are using up through physical activity and daily activities, then you will lose weight.

Did you know?

Your risk of developing health problems increases with the more excess weight you carry. If you are already overweight, it is important to try to stop gaining more weight. This will help to reduce your level of risk.

If you can manage to lose some of the extra kilos, that will be even better for your health. However, even if you don't manage to lose any weight, what's important is being physically active, eating healthily and looking after yourself so that you can achieve the best health.

Is my weight a health risk?

Some people think they are overweight when they aren't; others think their weight is fine when it isn't. While you can generally tell if you've put on weight by your clothes being tighter or having to loosen your belt a notch or two, this won't tell you if you are overweight.

The best way to find out if your weight is a health risk is to check with your doctor. There are a few very simple and pain-free measurements that your doctor can do to check your weight. Your doctor can then consider your weight and your overall health and advise if you need to do something about your weight.

Excess weight around your middle is a greater health risk

Your health can be affected by how much you weigh as well as by your body shape. Men often carry their excess weight around their middle, while women often carry their excess weight on their hips and thighs.

Carrying excess weight around your middle (being 'apple shaped') is more of a health risk than if excess weight is on your hips and thighs (being 'pear shaped'). The so-called 'pear shape' is actually a healthier body shape than being 'apple shaped'. If you are carrying your excess weight around your middle, the Heart Foundation encourages you to visit your doctor to discuss your weight.



If I need to lose weight, what do I do?

If your weight is a health risk or it's affecting your enjoyment of life, you need to do something about it. To lose weight, you need to use up more energy (kilojoules) than you are taking in. This means that you need to look at how you can reduce your energy (kilojoule) intake and increase your energy (kilojoule) output. That all comes down to the food and drinks you consume – what types and how much – and the type and amount of physical activity you do.

Despite what various books and diets may say, losing weight in a healthy way is not quick and it's not simple. Fad or crash diets are often unhealthy and are not helpful with losing weight and keeping it off in the longer term. People have generally put their weight on over a period of time, maybe even years, so it's not going to come off overnight. What can change overnight though is your commitment to make some changes to your eating patterns, to increase your physical activity levels, and to reduce the amount of time you spend sitting.

Once you've decided to make a change, you need to work out your plan. This plan will help you to work out where you can make changes, what changes you will make and to be realistic about what you can achieve.

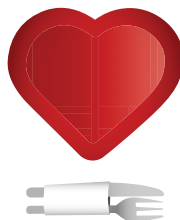
My weight loss plan

- Step 1** Set realistic weight loss or lifestyle goals.
- Step 2** Identify what you eat and drink, your level of physical activity and amount of sitting time.
- Step 3** Make changes to what you eat and drink.
- Step 4** Increase your physical activity levels and reduce your sitting time.
- Step 5** Keep going with your weight loss plan.

Remember

If you really want to lose weight, keep the weight off and be healthier, you need to change your eating patterns and increase your physical activity levels. Just doing one or the other is usually not enough.

Want to speak
with a health
professional? Call
1300 36 27 87



Quick tip

Write your goal or goals down, so you have a handy reminder of what you are trying to achieve.

Step 1: Set realistic weight loss or lifestyle goals

Set yourself realistic goals. It may just be one goal or you might set a couple at the same time. The key is to choose a goal or goals that suit you. This will help to keep you motivated and stop you trying to do too much too soon. For example, some realistic goals might be:

- **to stop gaining weight** – if you have recently been gaining weight, this is a useful goal to start with
- **to lose 2 kg in the next two months** – this may not sound like much and may sound very slow, but if you can do this and keep this weight off, then that is a fantastic effort.

If you make your goal too difficult, you can end up feeling like a failure when it really isn't your fault. For example:

- **to lose 10 kg in 10 weeks** – this is not easy. Losing 10 kg may take months to achieve, possibly 12 months or more, if you are losing weight healthily.



It's much better to choose small goals and lose weight gradually than set a goal that seems unachievable. Even if you only ever lose a few kilograms it can make a big difference to your health, and it's better than continuing to gain weight.

Your goals can focus on a change in weight, but they could also focus on changing your eating patterns, increasing your physical activity levels and reducing your sitting time. For example, some goals might be:

- to limit the number of times you buy take-away foods to once a week
- to go for a 30 minute walk on at least three evenings each week
- to reduce the amount of TV you watch each day.

Try not to become 'ruled' by the scales. If you want to weigh yourself, make sure it's no more than once a week. Always remember that the amount of weight you lose is only one way of measuring your achievements.

Some other important ways to measure how well you are doing include:

- how you feel
- if your clothes are looser
- if you can do things without getting tired.

And if you've managed to improve your eating patterns, increase the amount of physical activity you do, and reduce the amount of time you spend sitting each day, that's positive for your overall health even if you don't manage to lose any weight.



For more
information
on this topic
please call
1300 36 27 87



Quick tip

Keeping a food and drinks diary will help you to see what, when and how much you are eating and drinking.

Your diary may also help you to identify 'cues' or 'triggers' that prompt you to overeat, and identify areas where you can make some changes.

Step 2: Identify what you eat and drink, your level of physical activity and amount of sitting time

To do this, you might like to keep a diary for a week. Keeping a diary can help you to see where you can make changes.

If keeping a diary works for you, here are some tips on how to do it.

Tips on keeping a food and drinks diary

- Using a notebook, notepad or computer, write down everything you eat and drink each day.
- If you can, also include the amount of food or drinks you have.
- Don't forget to write down snacks as well.
- Write down the time of eating/drinking and where you were eating/drinking, such as at home with the family, on my own in front of the TV or at a café.



Tips on keeping a physical activity and sitting diary

- Use your computer or the same notebook or notepad that you use for your food diary, or use a separate one.
- Write down all the times you are active – write what you do, what part of the day you are being active and for how long, including:
 - any planned activity you do, such as going to the gym, jogging or playing sport
 - activity, such as housework, gardening, taking the stairs instead of a lift, walking to the local shops, walking the dog.
- Believe it or not, it's also very useful to record the amount of time you spend sitting. Write down what it is you are doing when you are sitting, such as watching TV, working or driving the car.

Recording both your active and sitting time will help you to work out how active or inactive you are, the times you are active and inactive, and where you could try to make changes to increase your physical activity levels and reduce your sitting time.





Step 3: Make changes to what you eat and drink

If you've kept a food and drinks diary, use the information from your diary with the following information to help to identify changes you can make.

Healthy eating for weight loss is about making sure you are still getting all the nutrients you need for good health while reducing the amount of energy (kilojoules) you take in. The good news is that many foods that are lower in energy (kilojoules) are also packed full of nutrients – and these are the types of foods you need to eat most.

Choose foods and drinks lower in energy (kilojoules)

Foods

Vegetables, fruit and legumes (for example, split peas, kidney beans, baked beans, three bean mix, lentils and chickpeas) provide some energy (kilojoules) but they are also packed full of vitamins, minerals and fibre. Eating these sorts of foods helps to make you feel full, without giving you too much energy (kilojoules).

Other lower energy (kilojoule) food choices that also provide a range of vitamins and minerals include:

- reduced, low or no fat milk and yoghurt
- lean meat and poultry (meat trimmed of all visible fat and chicken without skin) and fish
- wholegrain or wholemeal bread and breakfast cereals, plain pasta (preferably wholemeal), plain rice (preferably brown) and plain noodles.

Including all of these types of foods in your daily eating plan will help to ensure you are getting all the nutrients you need without a lot of extra energy (kilojoules).

To take in less energy (kilojoules)

1. Choose foods and drinks lower in energy (kilojoules) – make these the main part of your meals and snacks.
2. Limit the amount of high energy (kilojoule) foods and drinks you have.
3. Watch your overall food and drink intake.

Drinks

Plain water is by far the best option because it has no energy (kilojoules). It's also cheap and quenches your thirst.

Other suitable choices to include in moderation are plain mineral water; soda water; reduced, low or no fat milk; herbal tea; and tea or coffee (if you have milk, use reduced, low or no fat varieties or 'added calcium' soy milk).

Limit high energy (kilojoule) foods and drinks

The types of foods and drinks that often contain lots of energy (kilojoules) are listed below.

Foods

- Chocolate, confectionery
- Potato crisps and other savoury snack foods, such as corn crisps
- Cakes, sweet biscuits
- Pastries – sweet and savoury
- Take-away foods, such as deep-fried foods, creamy pasta dishes, cheesy dishes and hamburgers

Drinks

- Soft drinks, fruit juices, fruit juice drinks, cordials and alcoholic drinks

You can still have these types of foods and drinks occasionally, but they really do provide a lot of energy (kilojoules) without giving you much else. Try to only have these types of foods and drinks as a treat or for a special occasion. Eating them daily or regularly throughout the week would lead to weight gain for most people. Take a look at the tables on pages 16 and 17 to see just how much energy (kilojoules) you could save by having a lower energy (kilojoule) food or drink choice rather than a high energy (kilojoule) food or drink choice.

Did you know?

A 375 mL can of soft drink has around 10 teaspoons of added sugar and provides around 600 to 800 kilojoules, depending on what flavour it is. Plain water or plain mineral water contains no energy (kilojoules).

A note about using fats and oils

Completely cutting out fats and oils is not the answer to weight loss. While fats and oils are high in energy (kilojoules), you need a certain amount of fats and oils to stay healthy. The best types of fat to include are the healthier types. These are found in margarine spreads and cooking oils made from canola, sunflower, soybean and olive oil. They are also in nuts, seeds and fish.

The type of fat you need to try to limit is saturated fat. This is the type of fat that raises cholesterol and increases your risk of heart disease. Reducing your intake of foods high in saturated fat will help to reduce your overall energy (kilojoule) intake and also help to reduce your risk of heart disease.

Saturated fats are found in fatty meats, full fat dairy products, butter, two vegetable oils (coconut and palm oil), and most deep-fried take-away foods and commercially baked foods, such as biscuits, cakes and pastries. Try to limit these types of foods.

Watch your overall food and drink intake

It is easy to eat more than your body needs, so be aware of the amount of food and drinks (other than water) you are having. This isn't about starving yourself, skipping meals or going thirsty. It's about eating when you actually feel hungry rather than eating because of the clock or just because food is there.

If you feel hungry all the time or find yourself wanting to eat all the time, you probably need to visit your doctor and seek some guidance about why this may be the case. Your doctor may refer you to another health professional, such as an accredited practising dietitian, for specific advice.

When eating out or buying take-away food, be careful about how much food you order. In many cases you can buy a large meal or a meal pack for around the same price as a smaller meal or an individual item. The trap here is that you end up eating a larger serving or more food than you actually need.

Try to limit your intake of high energy (kilojoule) drinks, such as alcohol, soft drinks, fruit juices and cordials. Make plain water your main drink choice and drink plenty of this throughout the day to make sure you don't go thirsty. Only have high energy (kilojoule) drinks occasionally and limit the amount.

See *Healthy meal ideas* on page 33 for lower energy (kilojoules) meal and snack options.

Can I have alcohol?

Alcohol is high in energy (kilojoules). Often when drinking alcohol, we tend to also snack on high energy (kilojoule) foods, such as potato or corn crisps, pastries and nuts.

You can still enjoy alcohol while trying to lose weight, you just have to limit how much you have.

Tips to lower your alcohol intake

- Drink water or plain mineral water first to quench your thirst, then have an alcoholic drink.
- Alternate a glass of alcohol with a low energy (kilojoule) drink, such as water or plain mineral water.
- Where appropriate, mix your alcoholic drink with plain mineral water, soda or diet soft drink.
- Use only half-measures of spirits.
- Choose a low alcohol or light beer.
- Choose a low alcohol wine if available.
- Always have water available at the table, whether you are dining out or at home.
- Use diet soft drinks in mixed drinks, for example diet cola with rum, or diet ginger ale with brandy.
- Take your time with each drink.
- Use smaller glasses.



Still have
questions? Call
1300 36 27 87





Modifying recipes

Many of your favourite recipes need only simple changes to reduce their energy (kilojoules) or their saturated fat content. The two steps to changing a recipe are:

1. try healthier cooking methods
2. change ingredients by reducing, removing or replacing with something else.

Method	Healthier cooking method
Deep-fry	Roast in the oven on a lined tray or grill tray. Food can be lightly steamed or microwaved first, then brushed with oil such as canola, sunflower, soybean or olive oil for crispness. Crumbed fish, chicken and oven fries can be cooked in the oven rather than deep-fried.
Shallow-fry/Sauté	Stir-fry using reduced salt stock and/or oil, such as canola, sunflower, soybean, olive or peanut oil. Try using a non-stick frypan.
Roast	Choose lean cuts of meat or trim all visible fat and then place the meat on a rack in a baking dish with 1 to 2 cm water. For extra flavour, add herbs to the water. Try brushing with a marinade to prevent the meat drying out, or cover the food with a lid or aluminium foil for part of the cooking time. Roasting on a spit or rotisserie will allow fat to drip away. Brush or spray vegetables with oil such as canola, sunflower, soybean, olive or peanut oil, and bake in a separate pan.
Casserole/Stew	Trim fat off meat before cooking. Add legumes, such as kidney beans, chickpeas, soy beans or lentils, for extra fibre and flavour. After cooking, chill the food so any fat solidifies on the surface. Skim the fat off the surface before reheating and thickening (if necessary).

Ingredient	Healthier alternative
Milk/Yoghurt/ Cream	Use reduced, low or no fat varieties. Use ricotta cheese whipped with a little icing sugar, fruit or reduced, low or no fat milk as a substitute for cream.
Sour cream	Blend cottage cheese and reduced, low or no fat milk (add a little lemon juice or vinegar if desired). Use reduced, low or no fat natural yoghurt. Use evaporated reduced fat milk and lemon juice.
Cheese	Use smaller amounts of reduced fat varieties. Use a little grated parmesan cheese instead of grated cheddar – it gives more flavour and less is needed. Mix grated reduced fat cheese with oats, breadcrumbs or wheatgerm for toppings on casseroles, gratins and baked dishes.
Butter/Margarine spreads	Use margarine spreads made from canola, sunflower or olive oil, and dairy blends that have earned the Heart Foundation Tick instead of butter, other dairy blends, lard, copha or cooking fats. Note: reduced fat or 'lite' spreads are generally not good for cooking.
Oil	Use a variety of oils for cooking. Some suitable choices include canola, sunflower, soybean, olive and peanut oil.
Mayonnaise/ Dressing	Use salad dressings and mayonnaise made from oils such as canola, sunflower, soybean and olive oil. Make your own using ingredients such as reduced, low or no fat yoghurt, buttermilk, tomato paste, balsamic or other vinegars, lemon juice, ricotta cheese, mustard and fruit pulp.
Meat/Poultry	Choose lean meats and poultry. Remove all visible fat from meat and skin from poultry before cooking. Marinate or add flavour with ingredients such as wine vinegars. Sear meat quickly to keep in juices.
Cakes/Biscuits	Use margarine spreads made from canola, sunflower or olive oil, or dairy blends that have earned the Heart Foundation Tick instead of butter. Use oils such as canola, sunflower or olive oil. The minimum fat required for biscuits is about 2 tablespoons per cup of flour – this will retain crispness. Make plain sponges, yeast cakes, breads, muffins and scones as they generally use less fat. Use wholegrain or wholemeal flour to add some extra fibre.
Pastry/Savoury	Use filo pastry, brushing every three to four layers with oil such as canola, sunflower, soybean or olive oil, egg white or reduced, low or no fat yoghurt. Use pastry made with oil such as canola, sunflower or olive oil.
Coconut cream/ Coconut milk	Use evaporated reduced fat milk with a little coconut essence. Alternatively, if you have time, soak desiccated coconut in warm reduced, low or no fat milk for 30 minutes, then strain, discard the coconut and use the milk. For occasional use, try a reduced fat coconut milk.

Comparison of energy (kilojoule) content of foods and drinks

Here are some examples of how you can make small but important changes to your eating habits. Remember it's the small changes that can make a big difference!

Also remember that these are just examples. The key is to think about what changes you could make in your food choices and the way you prepare and cook foods that will help to lower energy (kilojoules).

Less healthy food choices	kJ content	Healthier food choices	kJ content
1 plain large croissant (70 g) with 2 tsp butter and 2 tsp jam	1600	2 pieces wholemeal plain toast (30 g each) with 1 tsp margarine spread and 1 tsp jam per slice	970
2 breakfast wheat biscuits (30 g) + 2/3 cup full fat milk	887	2 breakfast wheat biscuits (30 g) + 2/3 cup skim milk	756
1 plain donut (70 g)	1045	1 medium banana (150 g)	365
1 packet potato crisps (50 g)	1045	1 medium apple (150 g)	270
2 choc-coated cream biscuits	743	2 plain sweet biscuits	277
1 chocolate bar (50 g)	1110	Small handful of almonds (~ 20) 20 g	473
1 meat pie (175 g)	1880	Ham and salad sandwich (made with 2 tsp margarine)	1105
Hungarian salami (30 g)	535	Ham, plain fresh (30 g)	174
1 cappuccino (1 cup) with full cream milk	375	1 cappuccino (1 cup) with skim milk	210
1 glass cola soft drink (250 mL)	440	1 glass low sugar or diet cola soft drink	4
Orange juice (sweetened) (250 mL)	400	1 glass water	0
1 glass dry white wine (100 mL)	263	1 glass dry white wine – reduced alcohol (100 mL)	167
1 stubbie/can full strength beer	585	1 stubbie/can light beer	260

Less healthy food choices	kJ content	Healthier food choices	kJ content
Pan-fried chicken parmigiana	2050	Pan-fried chicken breast, no skin (100 g)	795
1 medium T-bone steak with fat, grilled	1255	1 medium T-bone steak, trimmed of visible fat, grilled	960
Hamburger mince, 25% fat (100 g)	1230	Lean mince, 10% fat (100 g)	710
Chicken breast with skin, roasted without added fat (100 g)	920	Chicken breast, without skin, roasted without added fat (100 g)	605
1 fillet white fish, e.g. whiting, fried in batter (150 g)	1725	1 fillet white fish, e.g. whiting, steamed, poached or grilled (150 g)	630
Pasta carbonara (1 cup pasta with cream, bacon, cheese and egg)	1990	Pasta marinara (1 cup pasta with seafood and tomato sauce)	1358
1 large cob sweetcorn with 2 tsp butter	820	1 large cob sweetcorn (no butter)	520
½ cup green beans (60 g) plus 1 tsp butter	200	½ cup green beans (60 g)	50
1 medium baked potato with 1 tbsp sour cream	720	1 medium baked potato with 1 tbsp non-fat plain yoghurt	490
Small serve French fries (90 g)	1089	Small serve oven-baked potato wedges – about 6 wedges (90 g)	284
Lemon meringue pie (140 g)	1590	1 cup stewed fruit without sugar, with 1 scoop of reduced fat ice-cream	855
Full fat fruit yoghurt (200 g carton)	965	Diet/Non-fat (no sugar) fruit yoghurt (200 g carton)	380
Full fat ice-cream (2 scoops – 100 g)	750	Low fat ice-cream (2 scoops – 100 g)	590

Note: All figures are approximate values. Source material: Borushek A, *Allan Borushek's Pocket Calorie, Fat & Carbohydrate Counter*, 33rd edition, 2006.

Nutrition Information		
Serving per package:	10	
Serving Size:	20mL	
	Per 20mL	Per 100mL
Energy	320kJ	1600kJ
Protein	0.6g	3.1g
Fat, total	7.2g	36.0g
- saturated fat	2.0g	10.0g
Carbohydrate, total	2.4g	12.0g
- sugars	2.0g	10.0g
Sodium	220mg	1,100mg

Nutrition information panel

What to look for on a food label to find energy (kilojoules)

By law, all food labels in Australia must contain a nutrition information panel and an ingredients list. The only exceptions to this are foods that are sold in very small packages, herbs, spices, tea, coffee and food made and packaged at the point of sale, although some food outlets do provide this information.

The nutrition information panel is where you will find information about how much energy (kilojoules) the food or drink contains. This will tell you how much energy (kilojoules) there is in 100 g or 100 mL and in each serving of the food or drink. You can use this when comparing similar products to help you to choose the one lower in energy (kilojoules). For example, if you were comparing two types of sweet biscuits, you would choose the one that provided the least amount of energy (kilojoules) in 100 g.

The ingredient listing on the label can also help you to identify whether or not the food is high in energy (kilojoules). Ingredients are listed in order by weight. The main ingredient by weight will be listed first and the smallest listed last. If the first few ingredients in the ingredients list are high in fat and/or sugar, then the food/drink is likely to be high in energy (kilojoules). Some examples of ingredients that are high in fat and sugar are listed in the table below.

High fat, high sugar ingredients

Fat

Vegetable oil	Coconut oil
Vegetable fat	Palm oil
Animal fat	Chocolate chips
Animal oil	Milk solids
Shortening	Monoglycerides
Copha	Diglycerides
Lard	Chocolate
Tallow	Butter

Note: the words 'creamed' or 'toasted' may also indicate added fat.

Sugar

Sucrose	Glucose syrup
Maltose	Corn syrup
Lactose	Golden syrup
Dextrose	Disaccharides
Fructose	Monosaccharides
Glucose	Polysaccharides
Molasses	Honey
Malt extract	Invert sugar
Raw/Brown sugar	

The important Tick

Since 1989, shopping with the Heart Foundation Tick has been the easiest way to give your shopping trolley a health makeover.

Because the Tick is on more than 1200 foods in the supermarket, there's probably a Tick alternative to the foods you're already buying for you and your family – from bread, breakfast cereals, margarine spreads, frozen vegetables and yoghurt to fresh foods, such as milk, lean meat, nuts, avocados and eggs.

And because we understand that making changes to your eating patterns is not easy, we have Tick choices available on some 'occasional' foods too, to help you to make healthier choices.

Before being permitted to use the Tick, foods must meet strict nutrition and labelling standards – no exceptions! We test for different combinations of saturated fat, trans fat, salt, fibre and kilojoules, and regular random testing ensures that foods continue to meet the strict standards.

To make healthier eating for the family easy, just reach for the Tick. People with specific dietary needs should always follow the advice of their doctor or accredited practising dietitian.

Remember, there is only one Heart Foundation Tick and it will only ever look like this.



Visit www.heartfoundation.org.au/Tick.

Remember

All physical activity – whether it be playing a game of sport, going to the gym, going for a walk, moving around at work or even doing housework – uses up energy (kilojoules).

Want to know
more? Call
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Step 4: Increase your physical activity levels and reduce your sitting time

If you've kept a physical activity and sitting diary, use the information from your diary together with the following information to help to identify how you can be more physically active and reduce the time you spend sitting.

Being physically active uses up energy (kilojoules). The more you move, the more energy (kilojoules) you will burn. So think about movement as an opportunity to improve your health, rather than a time-wasting inconvenience.

How much activity do I need to do?

Thirty minutes of physical activity on most or all days of the week is great for your general health and well-being, regardless of your body weight or shape. For some people, this may even be enough to prevent weight gain.

If you need to lose weight or are gaining weight, then you will need to do more than the 30 minutes of physical activity each day recommended for general health.





The bottom line is that you need to increase your physical activity levels and reduce the amount of time that you spend sitting, so focus on these things first. Gradually try to build up the amount of time you are physically active and reduce the amount of time you spend sitting. Don't worry about how active other people are, just focus on trying to increase your own activity level.

If you can enjoy some vigorous activity as well, then that's even better. Vigorous activity, such as doing a gym class, playing sport or jogging, gives additional health, fitness and weight loss benefits.

It's all about you – the amount of activity that will work for you is likely to be different to what will work for someone else.

Just as some people seem to be able to eat and drink whatever they like without putting on weight, some people may also seem to be able to get away with doing little, if any, activity to keep their weight down. That doesn't matter. What matters is what is right and comfortable for you. So get active today!

A note about vigorous activity

If you are not currently active, have heart disease, have close relatives with heart disease, or if you have other major health problems, check with your doctor first before taking part in vigorous physical activity.



Getting physically active

There are really three ways to get active.

1. Fit it into your day

The easiest way is to think about how to make physical activity a part of your day – that is, how can you be active while doing something else that has to be done anyway? Think about how you can be physically active in as many ways as you can. Even though our lives are very busy, there are lots of ways to fit physical activity into our daily routine. Some of the following ideas may help to get you started.

At home

- Get off the couch and change the TV channels instead of using the remote.
- Get off the couch or off the chair – the more you sit on it, the less active you will be.
- Walk into the next room to speak to a family member rather than shouting through walls.
- Watch one less TV program each week and instead do something active during that time – go walking, do some housework or gardening, play games with the kids.
- If you have a garden, tend to it yourself – weeding, planting, digging, mowing the lawn will all help to burn off extra kilos and it can be fun at the same time.
- Housework – ironing, vacuuming, dusting, hand washing clothes, polishing furniture – may not seem like fun, but it burns up energy and somebody has to do it.
- Wash the car by hand – it's good for you and for saving water.
- Walk the dog if you have one – it's great for both of you.
- Clean out the cupboards, storage areas, garage or shed.
- Wash the windows – inside and out.
- Walk to the letterbox to post letters rather than waiting until the next time you're out in the car.
- Get a cordless phone and walk around while using it, rather than sitting down.

At work

- Visit your colleague in their workspace instead of phoning or sending an email.
- Take a break or use your lunch break to go for a walk – even 10 to 15 minutes is a good effort. Ask some others to go with you.
- If there are stairs, use them.
- If you sit at a desk all day in front of a computer, do some stretching exercises at least once a day.
- Try to get away from your desk throughout the day.
- Do some filing.

Going places

- Walk, ride your bike or rollerblade instead of driving. If you can't do it all the way, at least do it part of the way.
- Forget about finding the closest parking space – park further away and just walk the extra distance.
- Get off the bus/tram/train one or two stops earlier and then walk.
- Count to 10 before jumping in the car – just think about whether you really need to drive or not. The less you drive the car, the better it is for you and for the environment.

Social

- Catch up with friends for a walk.
- Go on outings that encourage you to walk around, such as visiting the zoo, gardens, fun parks, expos or historic sites.
- Visit the local park and take a picnic.
- Arrange to do active things with friends, such as bowling (ten pin or lawn), sailing, bike riding, tennis, rock climbing, dancing (all types), swimming or bushwalking.
- Join a local community walking group or try something new, such as belly dancing, tai chi or yoga.



Quick tip

Ask a friend, work colleague or family member to join you. Having another person along can be a great motivator – it helps you to keep your commitment to being physically active and it's good for their health too!



Remember

Every bit of extra movement will help to burn energy (kilojoules) and it all helps towards losing weight. Even if you don't need to lose weight, being physically active for at least 30 minutes each day is great for your health!

2. Do some planned physical activity

The second way to get more active and burn off extra kilos is to try to set aside some time each day for planned physical activity.

Many people struggle with this, saying that they don't have time to be physically active. And it is hard to find time when you have lots of other priorities, such as work, family commitments and social functions. It's really about making physical activity a priority for you. Try to get some planned activity into your life at least three times a week. Then try to build that up over time.

What are some examples of planned physical activity?

Doing any of the following sorts of activities on a regular basis for a set amount of time is planned physical activity:

- go for a walk or a jog
- go to a gym class – weights, aerobics, spin or pump
- play a sport – cricket, netball, football, volleyball, rugby, soccer, badminton, squash, tennis or volleyball
- go for a swim
- do yoga, tai chi or Pilates.

If some of your planned physical activity is vigorous activity – that is, it makes you really breathe hard and sweat – then it will bring extra health, fitness and weight loss benefits.

Using a pedometer is a great motivator for helping to increase your physical activity levels.

Pedometers are small instruments that clip onto your clothing and measure how much walking or running you are doing. Some will also tell you how much energy (kilojoules) you have burned. If you need some extra motivation, then consider purchasing a pedometer (the Heart Foundation has a pedometer – call 1300 36 27 87 to order one – or you can purchase them from sports stores).

3. Sit less

If you are sitting down then you are generally not being active – chair activity classes are an exception to this.

If you've been recording in a diary how much time in a day you spend sitting down, you'll have a good idea of where you could make some changes. Always think about whether there is a way that you can be physically active rather than sitting down – then do it!

I'm already active – what can I do?

If you are already active, but are putting on weight or are overweight, then you still need to think about how you can be more active. You also need to look at your eating habits (Step 3, page 10) and see if there are any changes you need to make.

Review what you are doing and see if you can include more planned physical activity sessions or if there are other ways that you could build more activity into your daily routine. Also, think about how you can spend less time sitting and being inactive.

If you feel that you are already doing all that you can, speak with your doctor about what else you can do. He or she may also refer you to a physical activity health professional for advice.

Some notes about being physically active safely

- If you become breathless or uncomfortable while doing any physical activity, slow down or stop. Discuss this with your doctor as soon as you can.
- If you have been prescribed angina-relieving medicine, carry it with you when you are being physically active and follow your doctor's advice for its use.

Quick tip

One of the advantages of planning your physical activity is that you can mark it in your diary or on your calendar and you're more likely to do it.



- Know the warning signs of heart attack. The warning signs vary and usually last for at least 10 minutes. You may experience more than one of these:
 - tightness, fullness, pressure, heaviness or pain in one or more of your chest, shoulders, neck, arms, back or jaw
 - you may also feel short of breath, nauseous, a cold sweat, dizzy or light-headed.

If you experience these heart attack warning signs, immediately stop what you are doing and rest. If you are with someone, tell them what you are experiencing.

If your symptoms are severe, get worse quickly or last for 10 minutes, this is an emergency. Get help fast. **Call Triple Zero (000)* and ask for an ambulance.** Don't hang up. Wait for the operator's instructions.

*If calling 000 does not work on your mobile, try 112.

- Always wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing or clothing appropriate to the activity.
- When being active outdoors, wear a hat and put on sunscreen.
- Drink plenty of water before, during and after physical activity, especially in hot weather.

Too many reasons not to be physically active?

Apart from lack of time, other factors that can impact on your physical activity levels are:

- your weight
- feeling shy or embarrassed
- not feeling 'sporty'
- poor health
- having some form of injury or disability.

If your health is poor or you have some form of injury or disability, seek advice from your doctor about suitable ways for you to be physically active. Your doctor may refer you to a physical activity health professional to give you more specific advice.

If your reasons for not being active are because you are embarrassed to be active, or your weight makes it difficult or you just don't feel sporty enough, always remember that a great form of physical activity is walking. Most people can walk and you can do this anywhere – even around your home.

Being physically active doesn't mean that you have to join a gym or play some form of sport. Doing these things is great, but if they don't suit you, you don't have to do them. It's most important that you find types of physical activity that you are comfortable to do.

Remember

It doesn't matter if walking is your only form of physical activity – what matters is that you are being active in some way and that you are enjoying it.



Comparison of energy (kilojoules) used through different physical activities

Here are some examples of how you can make small but important changes to increase your physical activity levels. Remember it's the small changes together that can make a big difference.

Also remember that these are just examples. The key is to think about what activities you do and how you can make improvements.

Sedentary	kJ burned	Active	kJ burned
Waiting for 30 minutes for home delivery of food	4	Cooking for 30 minutes	105
Using a lawn service	0	Gardening and mowing each for 30 minutes a week	1505
Letting the dog out the back door	8	Walking the dog for 30 minutes	523
Driving 40 minutes, walking five minutes (parking)	92	Walking 15 minutes to bus stop twice a day	500
Hiring someone to clean and iron	0	Ironing and vacuuming each for 30 minutes	635
Taking elevator or lift up three flights	1	Walking up three flights of stairs	63
Parking as close as possible, 10 second walk	1	Parking slightly further away, walking two minutes	33
Playing a computer game for 30 minutes	80	Playing a ball game for 30 minutes	546
Using the remote control to change TV channel	< 4	Getting up and changing the TV channel	13
Driving to the corner shop to get the paper	8	Walking to the corner shop for 10 minutes	167
Getting off the bus and walking five minutes to work	84	Getting off the bus one stop earlier and walking 15 minutes to work	252

Sedentary	kJ burned	Active	kJ burned
Shopping online for one hour	125	Shopping at a mall, walking one hour	606–1003
Driving to local shops for lunch	8	Meeting a friend and walking 20 minutes to a local café	334
Reclining while talking on the phone for 30 minutes	16	Standing while talking on the phone for 30 minutes	84
Sending an email to a colleague (four minutes)	10	Walking one minute and standing talking to a colleague for three minutes	25

Source material: Amended table adapted from Mayo Clinic Proceedings Table 2002, based on Beil L. *What is proper weight? Shake it up or go figure.*





Step 5: Keep going with your weight loss plan

Deciding what changes you can make

After you've worked out where you think you could make some changes to what you eat and drink, your physical activity levels and sitting time, think about where you will start.

Although you might be keen to do it all at once, it's best to do things gradually. What you are trying to do may not be easy – you need to change your way of life and that's going to take some time, so give yourself time. Start with a change you think you can make fairly easily and give yourself a realistic amount of time to achieve it. Once you've managed one change, try the next one on your list.

Some examples of changes you might choose are:

- in the next fortnight, I will change to reduced fat milk instead of full cream milk
- I am going to go for a 15 minute walk on two evenings each week for the next month
- I'm going to eat two pieces of fruit each day this week
- rather than use the escalator, I'm going to take the stairs instead
- I'm going to cut my TV viewing to one hour on three days this week.

Review your goal and your changes

It's important to stop and reflect on how you are going with things. Have you achieved what you set out to do? If so, then give yourself a pat on the back and reward yourself. If you haven't quite achieved what you wanted to, don't be discouraged. Now is the time to reflect on what you set out to do. Think about if you have:

- tried to do too much too soon – remember, small changes over time are best
- given yourself enough time – maybe you just need another month or two to make it happen
- tried to do something that just isn't right for you – is there something else that you should try?

Reward yourself

Don't forget to spoil yourself every now and then. Changing your eating patterns, increasing your physical activity levels and losing weight is not that easy. So when you achieve a change, make sure you give yourself some sort of reward. Some examples are:

- go to a movie
- buy yourself something that you want, rather than need
- go to a theatre show, a concert or a sporting event
- go out to a nice restaurant for dinner
- buy some new clothes
- go on a nice outing with family or friends
- buy yourself a new book to read
- buy your favourite magazine
- get some fresh flowers for your home
- buy a nice pot plant at the market or local nursery
- phone a friend overseas who you haven't spoken with for a while
- buy some new sporting attire or equipment

Remember

Take some time to think about how you are feeling about the changes you are making. These changes need to be for the rest of your life, so it's really important that you are enjoying your life and feeling well and happy about the changes.



- buy a pedometer – a great motivational tool to track your physical activity
- visit a place you enjoy – the beach, a park or a museum
- visit friends
- enjoy a weekend away
- have a massage.

Keep going with your changes

Don't worry if you have a day where you feel that it's all too hard or you haven't been able to keep up with your changes. We all have days like that. Just make sure that the changes you've set yourself suit you and then keep going with them.

Once you are comfortably making the first changes you've decided upon, or you've reached a particular goal, keep going with those first changes and set yourself some new changes or new goals to achieve.



Healthy meal ideas

Following are some ideas for healthier, lower energy (kilojoule) meals and snack options.

Food at home

Breakfast

Toast

- Use wholegrain or wholemeal bread.
- Try toppings such as a small serve of baked beans, tomatoes, creamed corn, mushrooms or cottage cheese.
- Spread toast thinly with jam, honey or peanut butter – these are all high in energy (kilojoules) so try to limit the amount you use.
- Use margarine spreads made from canola, sunflower or olive oil, or dairy blends that have earned the Heart Foundation Tick instead of butter.

Breakfast cereals

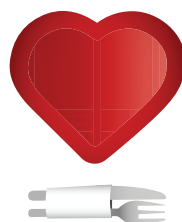
- Choose an untoasted, high fibre, wholegrain cereal, such as rolled oats, wheat biscuits or bran cereals.
- Use reduced, low or no fat milk, or 'added calcium' soy beverages.
- Add fruit – fresh, stewed or canned fruit (choose fruit canned in natural juice or unsweetened, or drain the liquid from the fruit).
- Add reduced, low or no fat yoghurt.

Other ideas

- Poach, boil or scramble eggs (use reduced, low or no fat milk). Serve with tomatoes, spinach, mushrooms and salmon or lean, reduced salt ham. Serve on wholegrain or wholemeal bread.
- Make pancakes using reduced, low or no fat milk or buttermilk, wholemeal flour and margarine spread made from canola, sunflower or olive oil, or dairy blends that have earned the Heart Foundation Tick instead of butter.
- Chop fresh fruit and top with reduced, low or no fat yoghurt.



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Snacks

- Snack on fruit – fresh, stewed or canned (choose fruit canned in natural juice or unsweetened, or drain the liquid from the fruit).
- Choose reduced, low or no fat yoghurt (plain or flavoured).
- Crunch on a small handful of plain, unsalted nuts.*
- Snack on wholegrain or wholemeal crisp bread with sliced tomato and pepper.
- Choose muesli bars with the Heart Foundation Tick.
- Enjoy a cup of vegetable soup (choose reduced salt).

*Nuts can contribute to an excess energy (kilojoule) intake so limit the quantity and frequency of eating them.

Lunch

Sandwiches

- Fill sandwiches with lots of salad vegetables and a small serving of lean meat, skinless chicken, canned fish, hommus or a low fat cheese, such as cottage cheese.
- Make toasted sandwiches. Try fillings such as baked beans, lean meats, pineapple, tomatoes and vegetables, such as corn, spinach, asparagus and capsicum.
- Use wholemeal or wholegrain bread or rolls and margarine spreads made from canola, sunflower or olive oil, or dairy blends that have earned the Heart Foundation Tick instead of butter.
- Try different varieties of bread, e.g. focaccia, pita, bagels and mountain bread.

Salads

- Include lots of different vegetables.
- Try adding fresh fruit or plain, unsalted nuts.
- Add legumes, such as four bean mix or chickpeas.
- Try pasta (preferably wholemeal), rice (preferably brown), couscous or noodle salads.
- Add lean meats, skinless poultry or fish.

- Use salad dressings and mayonnaise made from oils such as canola, sunflower, soybean and olive oil. Serve dressings and mayonnaise on the side so that people can add their own if they wish.

Soups

- Try vegetable- or legume-based soups. Serve with crusty bread to make a meal.
- Use evaporated skim milk instead of cream or full fat milk for 'creamy soups'.

Other ideas

- Make home made pizza using a small pita bread (preferably wholemeal) as the base. Add reduced salt tomato paste, a small amount of reduced fat cheese, pineapple and vegetables, such as mushrooms, onion and capsicum.
- Rye crackers with tomato, basil and black pepper.
- Rice paper rolls or sushi.
- Tub of fruit salad with reduced, low or no fat yoghurt.

Evening meal

Stir-fry dishes

- Include lots of vegetables and use lean meat, skinless chicken or fish.
- Serve with pasta (preferably wholemeal), rice (preferably brown), couscous or noodles.
- Use oils such as canola, sunflower, soybean, olive, sesame and peanut oil.
- Add legumes, such as chickpeas, or some chopped plain, unsalted nuts, such as cashews or peanuts.*
- Flavour with herbs and spices, e.g. garlic, onion, chilli or ginger.

*Nuts can contribute to an excess energy (kilojoule) intake so limit the quantity and frequency of eating them.





Pasta dishes

- Try wholemeal pasta varieties.
- Make a vegetable-based sauce, such as tomato or pumpkin.
- Add lean meats or fish and lots of vegetables.
- Use ricotta cheese or light evaporated skim milk to make a 'creamy' sauce instead of using cream.
- Use a small amount of reduced fat cheese or parmesan cheese.
- Serve with a garden salad.

Meat and vegetables

- Use lean cuts of meat, skinless poultry or fish.
- Serve meat with vegetables or salad and a grain-based food, such as pasta (preferably wholemeal), rice (preferably brown), couscous or polenta.
- Use oils such as canola, sunflower, soybean, olive or peanut oil to cook meat and vegetables.
- Use herbs, spices and garlic to add flavour.
- Add reduced, low or no fat natural yoghurt to jacket potatoes instead of using sour cream.
- Roast meat on a rack in a roasting pan with a little water, wine or reduced salt stock.
- Brush or spray roast vegetables with oil such as canola, sunflower, soybean or olive oil and bake in a separate dish.

Rice or noodle dishes

- Try brown rice.
- Add lots of vegetables.
- Use lean meats, skinless poultry or fish.
- Use oils such as canola, sunflower, soybean, olive or peanut oil.

Other ideas

- Make burritos, tacos or tortilla wraps using lean meat, skinless chicken or red kidney beans. Add plenty of vegetables to the mixture and use reduced, low or no fat natural yoghurt instead of sour cream.
- Vegetable frittata or quiche. Use reduced, low or no fat milk and margarine spreads made from canola, sunflower or olive oil, or dairy blends that have earned the Heart Foundation Tick instead of butter to make the quiche. Serve with a garden salad.
- Make a pie using filo pastry for the top and bottom or only have a pastry lid. Use lean meat, skinless chicken or fish and lots of vegetables for the filling.



Barbecues

- Trim all visible fat from meat before cooking.
- Marinate skinless chicken breast fillets, fish, seafood or lean meat in fruit juice or wine and herbs before cooking on the barbecue.
- Bake fish fillets in foil with seasonings and lemon juice.
- Make kebabs using lean meat and/or vegetable chunks.
- Slice vegetables, such as mushrooms, eggplant, sweet potato and zucchini, and cook on the barbecue.
- Use margarine spreads made from canola, sunflower or olive oil, or dairy blends that have earned the Heart Foundation Tick instead of butter. Use oils such as canola, sunflower, soybean, olive or peanut oil.
- Serve wholegrain or wholemeal bread.
- Serve a variety of salads. Use salad dressings and mayonnaise made from oils such as canola, sunflower, soybean and olive oils. Serve dressings and mayonnaise on the side so that people can add their own if they wish.



Desserts

- Fresh fruit salad, stewed, poached or canned fruit served with reduced, low or no fat yoghurt. Choose fruit canned in natural juice or unsweetened, or drain the liquid from the fruit.
- Fruit-based puddings or crumbles made with margarine spread, wholemeal flour, oats and reduced, low or no fat milk. Use margarine spreads made from canola, sunflower or olive oil, or dairy blends that have earned the Heart Foundation Tick instead of butter.
- Fruit pie or strudel made with filo pastry. Serve with reduced, low or no fat yoghurt.
- Cheesecake made using reduced fat cream cheese or ricotta cheese, margarine spread and plain sweet biscuits. Use margarine spreads made from canola, sunflower or olive oil, or dairy blends that have earned the Heart Foundation Tick instead of butter. Add lots of fruit on top or add fruit into the cheese mixture.
- Low fat ice-cream or diet jelly. Serve with fruit.

Take-away foods

Take-away food is quick and convenient, but it can be a real trap if you're trying to lose weight. Many take-away foods are high in energy (kilojoules), so choose carefully.

- Try to limit pastries (such as pies or pasties), pizza, hamburgers, hot chips, fried fish, fried chicken and creamy pasta dishes to no more than once a week. Instead choose take-away foods that contain lots of vegetables. Some suggestions follow.

Asian meals

- Healthier choices include steamed rice, mixed vegetable dishes, lean meats (beef, lamb, pork or chicken), fish, seafood and stir-fries.
- Try to limit deep-fried menu options.

Italian meals

- Choose pasta dishes with vegetable-based sauces.
- Choose thin crust pizza with pineapple, tomato and lots of vegetables, such as onion, capsicum, mushrooms, artichoke, eggplant and pumpkin. Try to avoid pizzas with salami or sausage meats. Instead, ask for lean meats, such as fish or lean reduced salt ham. Ask for a small amount of cheese or for reduced fat cheese.

Greek/Lebanese meals

- Choose souvlaki/shish kebabs in pita bread with tabouli or Lebanese bread with salad.
- Choose stuffed vegetable dishes.
- Limit pastries.

Barbecue chicken

- Choose the breast meat – chicken breast has a lower fat content. Remove the skin and fat and limit gravy and stuffing. The breadcrumbs and flour in the stuffing tend to soak up a lot of fat and the gravy is generally high in fat and salt.
- Grab some salad or vegetable dishes to have with the chicken rather than chips.

Hamburgers/Steak sandwiches

- If they're made with lean grilled meat and lots of salad, hamburgers/steak sandwiches can make a nutritious meal without too much energy (kilojoules). Where possible, ask for extra salad and a wholegrain or wholemeal bun or bread.

Sandwiches and bread rolls

- Ask for sandwiches and bread rolls to be made with margarine spreads made from canola, sunflower or olive oil, or dairy blends that have earned the Heart Foundation Tick instead of butter, and fillings such as lean meat, low or reduced fat cheese, skinless chicken, salmon, tuna or feta, and plenty of salad vegetables. Ask for wholegrain or wholemeal bread.





Corn on the cob

- Choose plain corn on the cob, rather than with butter.

Jacket potatoes

- Choose beans and salads as the main toppings and some margarine spreads made from canola, sunflower or olive oil, or dairy blends that have earned the Heart Foundation Tick instead of butter. Ask for a small amount of cheese or a reduced fat cheese, and for reduced, low or no fat natural yoghurt instead of sour cream.

Salad bars

- These usually offer a range of choices. Some types of salad, such as bean salad and pasta salad, can make a complete meal on their own. The main thing to watch for is the dressings and mayonnaise used – these are often high in saturated fat. Where possible, choose salads with a dressing or mayonnaise made from oils such as canola, sunflower, soybean or olive oil, or choose salads without dressings or with the dressing on the side.

Eating out

- Always read the menu carefully and don't be afraid to ask questions of the staff to help you to make your decision. Most cafés and restaurants will be more than happy to help and will do their best to provide you with a suitable meal. Some food outlets even provide nutritional information about their dishes.

Some tips

- Choose a meal with vegetables, legumes or salad included, or order these as a side dish.
- Ask for your vegetables to be served lightly steamed or microwaved, without added sauce or butter.
- Ask for your meal to be served without chips.
- Ask for salad dressing and mayonnaise made from oils such as canola, sunflower, soybean and olive oil, and ask for this on the side so you can add it yourself.

- Ask about ingredients or sauces – if they contain butter or cream, ask for them not to be added to your meal.
- Choose seafood dishes that aren't crumbed or fried.
- Choose pasta dishes with a vegetable-based sauce instead of a creamy one. Also try to limit sauces with fatty meats, such as bacon and sausage.
- Choose dishes containing lean meats. If you are served meat with fat, then remove it before eating. For example, remove the skin and fat from poultry, and trim fat from meat.
- Ask for smaller meals – perhaps a half serve if it's an option, or choose an entrée-sized dish.
- If you're eating in an outlet that offers larger serves at a cheaper price, try not to choose this option. It may be value for money, but it's not value for your health.
- 'All you can eat' and smorgasbords can encourage you to eat much more than you need. Try not to pile food onto your plate or go back for seconds. If there are lots of dishes you'd love to try, just have a small serving of the most appealing ones. You can always visit another time and try the dishes you've missed out on this time. If you really want to limit the amount of food you're eating, then use a smaller plate.
- Ask for plain, fresh bread (preferably wholegrain or wholemeal) instead of garlic and herb breads. Garlic and herb breads are high in energy (kilojoules).



Desserts

- Choose fruit-based options, such as baked fruit, poached fruit or fresh fruit salad. Ask for some reduced, low or no fat yoghurt or a small serve of low or reduced fat ice-cream.
- Suggest sharing a dessert with someone else at your table – that way you get to enjoy a treat, but the energy (kilojoules) is shared.
- Choose sorbets.

Questions and answers

What if I'm pregnant?

Pregnancy is not the time to try to lose weight. Gaining weight during pregnancy is necessary to ensure the healthy growth of your baby. Speak to your obstetrician about how much weight you are likely to gain during pregnancy. Your most important priority is your health and that of your baby. Making healthy food choices and being physically active will help with your weight and with keeping both you and your baby healthy.

What if my children are overweight?

Healthy eating and physical activity are important for kids too. Young children and adolescents are in important growth stages so they need adequate nutrition for growth and development. If you have children, encourage them to be physically active and to eat healthily. If you are concerned about your child's weight, discuss this with your doctor.

What about quick-fix diets and weight loss products?

The Heart Foundation does not currently endorse any weight loss diet, product or program. Don't be tricked into trying diets, products or programs that guarantee weight loss. They may provide results in the short term, but generally will not help you to keep weight off in the long term. Some may even be harmful to your health.

What about weight loss centres?

These can be useful to help to get you started. Like most things, some are better than others. Check out what the centre offers, the costs involved and the qualifications of staff, and always read the fine print on any documentation. Don't be pressured into signing up to something you aren't sure about.

How much energy (kilojoules) do I need each day?

This varies depending on whether you are male or female, your age, and how active you are. For example, a man aged 45 who weighs around 80 kg (~12 stone, 9 lb) and is moderately active needs around 12,700 kJ per day. A woman aged 45 who weighs 60 kg (~9 stone, 5 lb) and is moderately active needs around 9,000 kJ per day. These are just 'average' figures and as each of us is unique, this could be too much or not enough. It is most important that you don't reduce your energy (kilojoule) intake too drastically – even if you do need to lose weight, your body still needs energy (kilojoules) and adequate nutrients.

How much energy (kilojoules) do I need to cut down to lose weight?

One kilogram (2.2 lb) of body fat has an energy value of around 32,000 kJ. So to lose 1 kg of body fat, you need to reduce your energy intake by 32,000 kJ. That may sound impossible, but think about it like this: if you reduced your energy (kilojoule) intake by around 350 kJ per day (2,450 kJ per week), that could lead to a weight loss of around 4 kg over a year (350 kJ per day is equal to about three small squares of chocolate). So you can see it is possible to reduce your energy (kilojoule) intake and that even small changes do make a big difference – so long as you can maintain that change. Take a look at the tables on pages 16 and 17 to see just how you can reduce your energy (kilojoule) intake.

How much energy (kilojoules) do I need to use up to lose weight?

One kilogram (2.2 lb) of body fat has an energy value of around 32,000 kJ. So to lose 1 kg of body fat, you need to increase your energy output by 32,000 kJ. That may sound impossible, but think about it like this: if you increased your energy (kilojoule) output by around 350 kJ per day (2,450 kJ per week), that could lead to a weight loss of around 4 kg over a year (350 kJ per day is equal to about 20 minutes of walking). So as you can see, even a small increase in energy (kilojoule) output will make a big difference – so long as you can maintain that change. Take a look at the tables on pages 28 and 29 to see just how you can increase your energy (kilojoule) output.

Should I be counting kilojoules?

The main points for healthy weight loss are to increase your physical activity levels, reduce the amount of time you spend sitting and to look at your food choices overall – choosing mainly foods and drinks lower in energy (kilojoules) and only having high energy (kilojoule) foods and drinks occasionally. Being aware of which foods and drinks are high in energy (kilojoules) will help you to make healthier choices.

If counting kilojoules works for you then do it, but don't let the number of kilojoules you consume rule your life. Worrying only about the number of kilojoules eaten causes some people to end up starving themselves and probably doing more damage to their health than if they stayed a bit overweight. So the bottom line is, be aware of where the energy (kilojoules) in your food and drinks is coming from and make food and drink choices that are mainly lower in energy (kilojoules).

What about nuts?

Most nut varieties are high in fat, but they mainly contain the healthier types of fats. Including plain, unsalted nuts as part of healthy eating is okay. However, nuts are easy to eat too much of, so if you are trying to lose weight, be aware of the amount you eat and how often you eat them.

What about avocado?

Avocados are high in fat, but it's the healthier type of fat. While avocados do provide more energy (kilojoules) than most other fruit and vegetables, they also provide nutrients and fibre. If you are trying to lose weight, you can still enjoy avocado.

Are fruit juices fattening?

They can be – it depends how much you drink. Fruit juices and fruit juice drinks don't contain fat but they contain sugar – and sugar provides energy (kilojoules). Fruit juice is better than fruit juice drinks because fruit juice drinks contain added sugar as well. One glass of fruit juice provides around the same amount of energy (kilojoules) as a glass of soft drink. So while fruit juice may sound healthier than soft drink and it does have some nutrients in it, it is not a low energy (kilojoule) option.

If you feel like fruit juice, only have a small glass or use it like cordial and dilute with water.

Are kilojoules the same as calories?

Kilojoules and calories are both a measure of energy. Kilojoules is the modern term for a measure of energy and calories is the older term – much the same as kilometres is the modern term and miles is the older term for distance. One calorie equals 4.2 kilojoules. When you look at the nutrition information panel on a food label, you will see that energy is listed as kJ – kJ is short for kilojoules.

I've heard the words 'overweight', 'obese' and 'obesity' – what do they mean?

A person is classified as being overweight when they are carrying an excess of body fat. The word 'obese' is used to describe a person who is carrying a large amount of excess body fat and is very overweight – to the point that their health is impaired. Obesity is the condition associated with being obese. Obesity is associated with a range of health and social problems.

Does the type of oil or fat I use make a difference to my energy (kilojoule) intake?

All fats (such as butter, lard and margarine spreads) and oils are high in energy (kilojoules) and provide about the same amount of energy (kilojoules). The only real difference occurs with a reduced fat margarine spread or reduced fat dairy spread. The energy (kilojoule) content of these varies, but can be as low as half that of the normal variety.

A number of reduced fat spreads are not suitable for baking, so it's always a good idea to check the label. Note that it's not possible to buy reduced fat oils.

The key issue to consider when choosing oils and fats is the main type of fat they contain. It's always best to choose margarine spreads made from canola, sunflower or olive oil, or dairy blends that have earned the Heart Foundation Tick instead of butter. Use oils such as canola, sunflower, soybean, olive or peanut oil.

What about medicines or surgery – will they help?

If you are extremely overweight, you may need some extra help to lose weight. Your doctor may recommend medicines and/or surgery to help you.

There is a range of weight loss medicines available – your doctor can discuss these with you so that together you can make a decision about what's right for you. For further information about medicines, you can call Medicines Line on **1300 888 763** to speak confidentially with a pharmacist. Medicines Line is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 6pm Eastern Standard Time, for the cost of a local call. It is not an emergency service and does not replace advice from your doctor or pharmacist.

Weight loss surgery, while often successful, is really only a suitable option for people who are extremely overweight and only when other methods have not worked. Your doctor will be able to advise if surgery is appropriate for you.

Always remember that changing your eating patterns and increasing your physical activity levels are absolutely necessary for healthy weight loss – even if you are taking medicines or have surgery.

Are there any complementary or alternative therapies that can help me to lose weight?

There are many pills, supplements and tonics promoted as being helpful for weight loss that are available over the counter from the chemist or from various health shops. Always be cautious before trying these – they may sound good, but they might not work or worse still, they may be harmful to your health.

The Heart Foundation encourages you to speak with your doctor about these options before deciding to use them. This is very important, particularly if you are on any kind of medicine for any health issue. You need to be careful that the weight loss pill, supplement or tonic won't affect how your medicine works or react with it in a way that may be harmful to your health.

If you decide to use one of these types of products even though your doctor has advised against it, make sure you let your doctor know. Your doctor needs to be fully aware of every type of medicine or therapy you are using to give you the best possible care.

My doctor has talked about my BMI – what is it?

BMI stands for body mass index. The body mass index is a measure of your weight in relation to your height, and is used to assess whether you are underweight, a healthy weight or overweight. $\text{Body mass index} = \text{weight (kg)} / \text{height (m)}^2$. A body mass index of 18.5 to 24.9 indicates a healthy body weight. A body mass index of 25 and above indicates overweight. Body mass index is just one measure your doctor can use to assess your weight and whether or not it might be a health risk for you.

Why did my doctor measure my waist?

Measuring your waist or 'waist circumference' gives an indication of whether or not you are carrying your excess weight around your middle. Carrying excess weight around your middle greatly increases your health risk. A waist measurement of 94 cm or more for men and 80 cm or more for women indicates increased health risks. Waist measurements of 102 cm or more for men and 88 cm or more for women indicate even greater health risks. Your doctor will advise if your waist measurement is a problem and if you need to try to lose some weight.

Shouldn't I be following a low carbohydrate diet to lose weight?

While a number of people promote very low carbohydrate diets for weight loss, the Heart Foundation does not recommend very low carbohydrate diets for long-term weight loss. The Heart Foundation does not recommend these types of diets because their long-term health consequences are not known, they often include foods high in saturated fat, and they can lack adequate amounts of vitamins and minerals needed for good health. To achieve healthy weight loss, the Heart Foundation recommends enjoying healthy eating, increasing your physical activity and reducing your sitting time.

What about glycaemic index – is that important for weight loss?

The glycaemic index, or GI, is a way of comparing the effect of different carbohydrate foods on the levels of glucose (a sugar) in our blood. Low GI foods raise blood glucose levels slowly and provide a steady energy (kilojoule) source. High GI foods raise blood glucose levels quickly. Research shows that eating lower GI foods, such as wholegrain cereals, fruit, vegetables and legumes, may help you to feel fuller for longer, so you are less likely to eat more food than you need. When it comes to healthy eating for weight loss, the key is to choose foods lower in energy (kilojoules) and be mindful of how much food you eat.

More information

For more information on healthy eating and drinking, and increasing your physical activity levels, call our Health Information Service on 1300 36 27 87 (for the cost of a local call) or email health@heartfoundation.org.au.

You may also like to seek the advice of an accredited practising dietitian or physical activity health professional. Ideally, discuss this with your doctor first and seek a referral. However, if you would like to contact an accredited practising dietitian or a physical activity health professional yourself, see the following contact details.

To find an accredited practising dietitian:

- contact the Dietitians Association of Australia on 1800 81 29 42 or visit www.daa.asn.au
- check the *Yellow Pages*.

To find a physical activity health professional:

- check the *Yellow Pages* under:
 - exercise physiologists
 - physiotherapists
 - health and fitness centres and services
 - personal fitness trainers
- on the internet:
 - to find an exercise physiologist, use the Australian Association for Exercise and Sports Science website search facility at www.aaess.com.au
 - to find a physiotherapist, visit the Australian Physiotherapy Association website www.physiotherapy.asn.au.

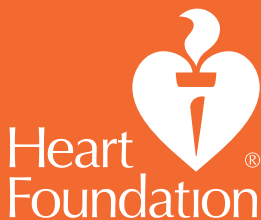
Health Information Service

The Health Information Service is our national telephone information service. For the cost of a local call from anywhere in Australia, you can obtain information on issues such as heart disease and stroke, healthy eating, managing blood pressure, cholesterol, smoking cessation, physical activity and heart surgery.*

Our Health Information Service is open during business hours, Australia wide. To speak to a trained heart health professional, call our Health Information Service on 1300 36 27 87 or email health@heartfoundation.org.au.

* Please note that our Health Information Service is not an emergency, diagnostic or counselling service. We support giving free heart health information to the Australian public—many of our brochures are free of charge for single copies. If you have any questions, call our Health Information Service on 1300 36 27 87.





For heart health information
www.heartfoundation.org.au
1300 36 27 87

Key points to remember about healthy weight loss

Two key factors that affect body weight are:

- the amount of energy (kilojoules) that we put into our bodies from food and drinks
- the amount of energy (kilojoules) that we use up through physical activity and other daily activities

To lose weight, keep the weight off and be healthier, you need to change your eating patterns, increase your physical activity levels and decrease the amount of time you spend sitting each day.

To help you to make lifestyle changes, set yourself realistic goals. Choose a goal or goals that suit you to keep you motivated.

When you achieve a change, reward yourself, then set yourself new goals to achieve.

Body weight is just one factor that can impact on your health and needs to be considered along with your overall health and wellbeing.

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