



O B E S I T Y

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The number of obese individuals in the United States continues to grow at an alarming rate. Obesity not only affects adults but, unfortunately, is becoming more prevalent in children. The increase in the number of people who are not at a healthy weight, both adults and children, is resulting in a greater prevalence of weight-related disease states. We all know that maintaining a healthy weight, either through weight loss or weight maintenance, can help prevent many chronic conditions and improve how we function on a day-to-day basis. The bottom line is that we know we have to live a healthier lifestyle, but the question is "How do we maintain it?" Implementing small changes into your daily life and being a role model for your family, children or even friends by adopting a well-balanced diet and incorporating regular physical activity into your life will help keep you healthy and slow down the obesity epidemic.

Maintaining a Healthy Weight

Every individual has a different perception of what it means (or looks like) to be overweight or obese. Setting your own personal opinions aside, it is important for people to evaluate where they fall in terms how their weight affects their risk of developing weight-related medical conditions. A person's weight alone is not an accurate measure of their risk. Maintaining a body mass index at less than 25 kg/m² and a waist circumference at less than 40 inches for males and 35 inches for females can significantly reduce your risk for developing weight-related diseases. Preventing weight gain by adopting long-term lifestyle changes may be your first step to maintaining a healthy weight. The goal is to maintain equilibrium between the energy you take in as food/calories and the energy you burn through physical activity and movement.

Replacing foods that are high in fat and calories with fresh fruit and vegetables and foods high in fiber will not only maintain the level of calories you take in daily, but may also help reduce your daily caloric intake, resulting in weight loss. Increasing the amount of time you are physically active by 30 minutes a day, throughout the day, will result in the burning of additional calories. Simple and fun activities spread throughout the day not only will help maintain a healthy weight, but is a much more realistic lifestyle change to adopt. (See Table 3.)

Weight Loss Strategies

An effective weight loss strategy must include adopting a healthier lifestyle and positive attitude toward the lifestyle changes you choose to adopt. Weight loss medications can be considered in patients who have a high risk of developing obesity-related medical conditions. Available medications include sibutramine (Meridia[®]), orlistat (Xenical[®], Alli[™]), various appetite suppressants and herbal supplements. Surgical procedures for weight loss can be considered for individuals with obesity-related medical conditions. Although medications and surgery can be effective, they have

many unfavorable side effects. In order for weight loss medications or surgery to be most effective, they must be combined with lifestyle changes.

Achieving a healthy weight should not be a chore. Simply reducing your portion sizes, selecting healthier alternatives to your favorite foods and taking the stairs instead of the elevator are great ways decrease your daily calories. Regardless of how many calories you currently consume in a day, reducing your total daily calories by simply 500 to 1,000 cal/day results in a weight loss of one to two pounds in a week. Keep in mind one to two pounds per week may not sound like much, but to be successful in losing weight and maintaining the weight loss long term, you must set realistic goals. Developing mini-goals is a great way to avoid incorporating drastic changes in your lifestyle that you are likely not to maintain long term. Achieving your mini-goals and rewarding yourself for your success is a great way to keep motivated. Keep in mind reducing your total body weight by 10 percent will result in reducing your risk of developing obesity-related medical conditions.

Table 1 Weight Related Medical Conditions

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type 2 diabetes mellitus • High Blood Pressure • High cholesterol • Osteoarthritis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depression • Sleep apnea • Stress incontinence • Menstrual irregularities
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Table 2 Examples of Moderate Physical Activity

Less Vigorous	More Vigorous
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washing and waxing a car • Washing windows and floors • Vacuuming • Gardening • Walking • Stair walking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dancing • Swimming or water aerobics • Bicycling • Jumping rope • Playing a sport (volleyball, basketball, football, etc.)

Table 3 Mini-Goals to Achieve Successful Lifestyle Modification

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking further away from the door three days per week • Walking in place during commercials while watching TV • Substituting ice cream for a single serve frozen yogurt • Walking around the house when on a phone call • Substituting your favorite snack with a fruit or vegetable three days per week • Reducing the frequency you eat fast food by one day every week for one month

For more information, ask your pharmacist!

This information provided by the Michigan Pharmacists Association and: