

## Tips on Losing Weight

Eating too much or not being physically active enough will make you overweight. To maintain your weight, the calories you take in must equal the energy you burn. To lose weight, you must use more calories than you eat.

Research shows that achieving and maintaining a healthy weight can help to control cholesterol, blood pressure and blood sugar levels. It can also help to prevent weight-related chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, arthritis and some cancers. The 2007 Michigan Behavioral Risk Factor Survey reports that twenty eight percent of Michigan adults are considered obese. The Michigan Surgeon General's Health Status Report states that in Michigan, more than half of the adult population reports participating in physical activity less than the recommended 30 minutes per day.

Some weight-control strategies include:

- **Eat a healthy balance of carbohydrates, protein and fat.**
  - Eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day.
  - The USDA's *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* provides science-based advice on food and physical activity choices for health. Personalized eating plans and interactive tools to help you plan and assess your food choices can be found at <http://www.mypyramid.gov/> .
  
- **Gradual changes are best for losing weight.**
  - Small changes are easier to stick with than drastic ones. Smaller changes are also more likely to stay with you for the long term. Aim for goals that you know you will be able to maintain over years, not just weeks.
  
- **Watch Portion Sizes**
  - Start by leaving a little extra on your plate.
  - When you are full or even satisfied, stop eating. Eat slowly and chew your food thoroughly to give your body a chance to recognize that you've had enough.
  
- **Drink more water.**
  - Sugary drinks like juices, pop, cream & sugar in your coffee or tea all add up. Opt for drinking at least 8 glasses of water a day. In addition to providing hydration to your body, it will also help you feel full.
  
- **Be physically active.**
  - When it comes to increasing your activity, start slowly. Increase your daily physical activity gradually and you'll find that moving a little more isn't as hard as you think.

- Walking, running, hiking, swimming, skiing, biking, skating, dancing, yoga, just move more! There are many opportunities to be active (sports teams, the gym, going for a walk, etc.). But these aren't the only ways to increase your activity level. You can bike to work, walk up and down the stairs a few times before you take a shower, take an extra lap or two around the grocery store or park a little farther away from the door.

➤ **Be in it for the long term.**

- Crash or fad diets and extreme exercise routines will not keep you at your desired weight for the long term. Focus on achievable goals and behavior changes that you can live with for years, instead of just weeks.
- When you lose weight too quickly you are usually losing carbohydrate and water weight, not fat. Your body thinks that it's starving and reduces its metabolic rate, which makes it more difficult in the long run to keep the weight off.

Remember the key to healthy weight loss is eating well-balanced diet and moving around. Always consult your health care provider before starting any diet or exercise program.