

## How to lose weight by really trying

The brain regulates hunger. It monitors levels in the body like blood glucose. When the glucose level is lower than normal, it is a trigger for the brain to send a message that it's time to eat. If our stomach is used to being full, when it gets empty, the brain's message is "it's time to eat again." Losing weight is simple math. You have to use up more calories than you take in. When we take in more calories than we need, those calories are stored as fat. To get rid of any excess, we have to burn up beyond what we take in.

One pound equals about 3,500 calories. Each time 3,500 extra calories are eaten, a pound will be gained. Conversely, you can lose a pound when 3,500 extra calories are burned up. Parents need to be careful when preparing their child's diet. A diet can be low in calories and not nutritious, just as a diet can be nutritious and high in calories. For an overweight person, it is important to have a diet that is both nutritious and low in calories.

The goal of a low calorie diet is to provide less energy than daily requirements. Decreasing calories is very different from encouraging basic good nutrition. Good nutrition is about the correct amount of vitamins and minerals in addition to the appropriate amount of calories. To lose weight, high calorie foods have to be removed from a diet and replaced with foods that are low in calories. Fats are more calorie dense than carbohydrates and proteins, so decreasing fat intake can substantially decrease calories. When a person is overweight, the concern about increasing cholesterol is often a problem. Decreasing fat intake is important to both decrease calories and cholesterol as well.

A child cannot lose weight in a family that overeats. It is important for the entire family to follow the same rules as the child losing weight. Eating smaller portions will lower calorie intake. Eat only at meals. No eating in front of the television, in the car or before bedtime.

Children who are picky eaters are more likely to become overweight because the foods they will agree to eat are usually higher in calories. They tend to prefer foods that have a high amount of carbohydrates (breads, potatoes, chips, pastas) over vegetables filled with fiber which is not absorbed by the body. Eating lots of simple carbohydrates (i.e. sugar or white flour) is a problem because it rapidly increases blood sugar. This rapid increase tells the body to store those calories as fat and is followed by a decrease in blood sugar which leads to more hunger.

In addition to decreasing calorie intake, increasing activity will help in achieving weight loss. Children should have about 60 minutes of physical activity a day. What is helpful is that it doesn't have to happen all at once. Short periods of activity throughout the day are just as good as one long activity. If your child hasn't been active, help them start with what they can do and build up to 60 minutes a day.



Encourage your child to join a sports team such as soccer, basketball or baseball. If they are not interested in sports, help them find something they do enjoy such as riding a bike, walking the family pet, jumping rope or dancing. However, the best way to increase your child's activity level is to set a good example. Showing your child that you enjoy physical activity will go a long way in motivating them.

Obesity is not a problem that will just go away. There are no medications that will make a body burn more calories. You and your child must make a conscientious effort to achieve weight loss. Adhering to a successful diet and exercise plan will require consistent effort. Fortunately, with work and perseverance, your child can achieve a healthy body weight that can last a lifetime.

### **150 calories a day will equal about a pound a month.**

#### **Everything counts.**

The 150 calories you add can be as little as:

- One regular soda per day
- One small glass of juice
- Ten potato chips

#### **Or**

- A candy bar is approximately 300 calories. One bar a day is the addition of two pounds a month.
- The difference between light bread for sandwiches and regular bread is about 35 calories per slice. A sandwich with two slices of regular bread versus light bread is a pound every two months.



#### **Look at the difference:**

- Candy bar - 300 calories
- Bag of chips - 250 calories

#### **Compare to:**

- Salad (with dressing) - 120 calories
- Baked or broiled chicken - 150 calories
- Whole wheat toast with butter - 100 calories
- Apple with peanut butter - 150 calories
- Cheese stick - 100 calories
- Glass of whole milk - 150 calories

#### **Cut it out:**

- 1 tablespoon of butter or margarine equals 100 calories
- 1/2 to 1 cup of ice cream is 150 calories
- 1 tablespoon of mayonnaise is 60 calories
- 1 tablespoon of sugar is 45 calories
- Frying something rather than boiling or baking it adds about 100 calories.
- Studies have not confirmed a risk of cancer with artificial eating and drinking sweeteners. Sugary sweetened drinks and food can lead to obesity, which can lead to diabetes and heart disease.

#### **Suggestions for low calories snacks:**

- A sugar free popsicle has 0 calories
- Sugar free ices or slushies (A blender is a good addition to the kitchen.)
- Frozen fruit - grapes, strawberries or peaches
- Fruit
- Sugar free gelatin