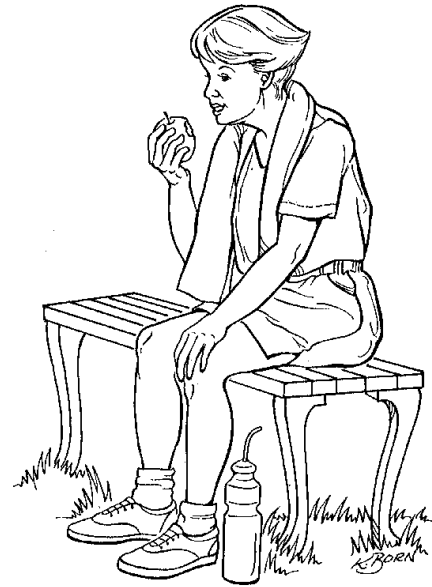


How Can I Manage My Weight?

Your heart will be healthier if you reach and maintain a healthy weight, and don't go up and down the scale like a yo-yo. If you've been able to lose weight, good for you! You've taken the extra strain off your heart and lowered your risk for heart problems. Be proud of your success!

Keeping extra weight off can be as challenging as losing it. Many things will tempt you to go back to your old habits. It takes commitment to stick to your new, healthy lifestyle. Yet when you do, you may notice that you have greater self control with food, feel stronger, have better eating habits and fewer mood swings, and are in better overall shape!



What if I go back to old habits?

A lapse is a small mistake or return to old habits. This can happen when you have a bad day and overeat or skip exercise. A relapse is when you go back to old habits for several days or weeks.

- Remember that having a lapse or relapse is not failing. You can get back on track.
- Think about whether you feel hunger (gnawing in your stomach) or urges (mental cravings for food).
- When you feel an urge, set a timer for 15 minutes and wait, or do something else before eating. This will teach you to be in control of your desire for food.
- Try to use other ways to respond to life's stresses besides eating. Take a brisk walk, start a new hobby or calm yourself through meditation.

What happens when I reach a healthy weight?

- After you reach a healthy weight, add about 200 calories of healthful, low-fat food to your average daily intake.
- After a week, if you're still losing weight, add a few hundred more calories.
- If you change the amount of physical activity you do, adjust your eating.
- Keep a record of what you eat and how much physical activity you get so you'll know how to make adjustments.

How can I stay at a healthy weight?

- Remember that eating smart doesn't mean "dieting." It means eating some foods in smaller amounts and eating high-calorie and high-fat foods less often.
- Always keep low-calorie and low-fat foods around. Use a shopping list, and don't shop when you're hungry.
- Plan all your meals. When you're going to a party or out to eat, decide ahead of time what you can do to make it easier to eat right.
- At a buffet table, choose wisely. At a friend's house, control your portions.
- When you're hungry between meals, drink a glass of water or eat a small piece of fruit, and stay out of the kitchen.
- When you really crave a high-calorie food, eat a small amount and forget about it, instead of resisting until you give in and gorge on it. If you don't trust yourself with just a little, don't eat any at all.
- Stay active! Don't give up on your physical activity plan.
- Find an exercise partner or exercise class to help you stay interested.

How can I learn more?

1. Talk to your doctor, nurse or other health-care professionals. If you have heart disease or have had a stroke, members of your family also may be at higher risk. It's very important for them to make changes now to lower their risk.
2. Call 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721) or visit americanheart.org to learn more about heart disease.
3. For information on stroke, call 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653) or visit StrokeAssociation.org.

We have many other fact sheets and educational booklets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage disease or care for a loved one.

Knowledge is power, so *Learn and Live!*

Do you have questions or comments for your doctor?

Take a few minutes to write your own questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider. For example:

What if I start gaining weight?

How can my family help me?
