

Weight Maintenance Tips (Keeping Weight Off)

This guide has been prepared for your use by registered dietitians. If you have questions or concerns, please call the nearest Aurora facility to contact a dietitian.

At least two out of every three of people who lose weight will gain all the weight back in a few years. Only about one out of 10 who lose 25 pounds or more will remain at their desired weight beyond two years. This does not sound very encouraging, but you can lose weight and keep it off. Maintenance means maintaining a new lifestyle. You have made positive changes in your eating and exercise habits and need to continue to do so. The following tips should help you maintain your weight loss, or help you continue to lose more weight if desired.

1. **Keep a daily food record.** You are more aware of what you eat and how much you eat if you write it down. Also, just knowing you have to write it down may prevent you from eating unnecessary calories or eating impulsively.
2. **Continue your exercise program.**
 - Exercise at least 4 to 5 times per week.
 - Aim for a total of 150 minutes per week at moderate intensity.
 - Include weights/weight machine two times per week.
 - Choose exercises you enjoy so that you will stay with it.
3. **Seek support from family and friends.** This is a key factor to maintaining weight loss. Joining a support group also may be helpful.
4. **Eat foods appropriately.** No food is a bad food. The *way* you eat it could be a problem. Appropriate eating is:
 - Planning ahead – it is okay to eat extra calories one day if you eat less or exercise more a few days before or after the special occasion.
 - Staying within your daily calorie limit – it is OK to have a high calorie treat tonight if you save up calories for it during the day – just don't skip any meals.
 - Eating slowly – you will enjoy it more if you take the time to taste your food.
 - Reasonable in amount and frequency – controlling the amount means controlling the calories. Go ahead and have the cheesecake, but eat a small piece (200 calories) instead of a larger one (300 to 400 calories).
5. **Eat in an appropriate setting** – eat at a proper time and place (sitting down at a table). Avoid distractions, such as watching TV or talking on the phone, and focus on eating.
6. **Monitor your progress.**
 - Weigh yourself once or twice a week to catch small weight gains.
 - Review eating habits/goals weekly.
 - Record and review exercise habits weekly.
7. **Reverse small weight gain right away** – this is the key to long-term weight control. Monitoring your progress can help prevent weight gain, but if it does occur:
 - Accurately record what you are eating and drinking, and the calories.
 - *Decrease* your calorie intake to not less than: 1,200 to 1,400 calories a day for women, 1,600 to 1,800 calories a day for men.
 - *Increase* your physical activity/exercise by about 100 to 200 calories a day. This is equivalent to a brisk 20- to 30-minute walk.

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8. **Remove yourself from or prevent high-risk situations**
 - Identify what your high-risk situation is and avoid it whenever possible.
 - Overeating usually occurs in response to specific foods, activities, social settings, feelings and times. Example – if you identify boredom as a feeling (trigger) that leads to eating, then prevent boredom by keeping busy.
9. **Plan menus/meals ahead of time** to discourage “on-the-run eating.”
 - Write them down.
 - Make your grocery list from your menu plan.
 - Shop from a list to limit impulse buying.
10. **Learn to anticipate and deal with stress.**
 - Exercise, relaxation techniques, tai chi, Pilates, yoga, reading and crafts can help you relax.
 - Exercise releases pleasurable brain chemicals called endorphins, which can help relieve stress.
11. **Don’t give up** after the first sign of a setback; just get back on track.
12. **If you can’t reach and maintain** your ideal or desired weight, re-evaluate your goal. Discuss this with your dietitian.
13. **Learn to forgive yourself.** Everyone experiences lapses in eating.
 - Catch the lapse before it turns into a “collapse.”
 - Learn from your behavior.
 - Keep trying to eat healthy and stay active.
14. **Maintain a positive attitude** no matter how difficult things get. Look at how far you’ve come, how good you feel, and how much healthier you are.

For a list of Aurora facilities with a dietitian,
call Aurora Health Care toll free at 888-863-5502.

The information presented is intended for general information and educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care provider. Contact your health care provider if you believe you have a health problem.