

WIN



Improving *your*
HEALTH:

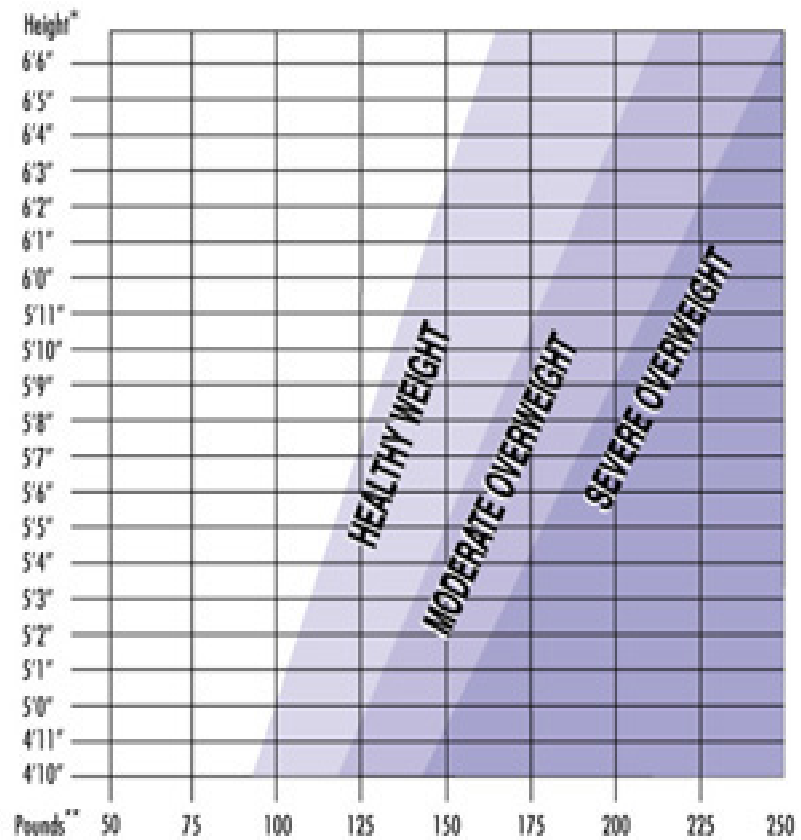
Tips for African American Men and Women

ENTER

You don't have to stop eating chocolate cake or start running marathons to improve your health. Making steady changes in your eating and physical activity habits—over time—will help you lose weight, feel better, and improve your overall health. This booklet offers tips to help you improve your health by eating better and being more active.

What do you weigh?

To see if you are overweight, use the weight-for-height chart below. Find your height in the left-hand column of the chart. Then move across the row to find your weight. Check to see if your weight falls in the healthy weight, moderate overweight, or severe overweight shaded areas. A healthy weight is different for everybody. That's why the chart shows a range of weights. Weights above the healthy weight range may mean you need to improve your eating and exercise habits.



* Without shoes

**Without clothes. The higher weights apply to people with more muscle and bone, such as many men.

Source: Report of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 1995, pages 23-24.

If the chart shows that you are overweight, don't be alarmed—there are steps and tips you can follow that can help you improve your health.

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Am I risking my health by being overweight?

Being overweight or obese can be dangerous to your health. Overweight means having extra body weight (including muscle, bone, fat, and water). Obese means having extra body fat. If your weight falls in the severe overweight shaded area of the weight-for-height chart, you are probably obese.

If you are overweight or obese, you are more likely to develop:

- diabetes
- high blood pressure
- heart disease
- certain forms of cancer.

Other diseases and health problems related to being overweight are:

- gallbladder disease and gallstones
 - osteoarthritis (wearing away of the tissue that protects the joints, possibly as a result of placing too much weight on them)
 - sleep apnea (a condition that causes you to stop breathing for short periods during sleep)
 - gout (another health problem causing joint pain)
-



In general, the more overweight you are, the more likely you are to have health problems. Read WIN's fact sheet *Do You Know the Health Risks of Being Overweight?* for more information. (See the end of this booklet for information on how to contact WIN.)

Losing weight can help decrease some of the risks caused by being overweight. Losing 5 to 10 percent of your body weight can help improve your health. For example, if you weigh 200 pounds, losing 10 to 20 pounds can help lower your blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

If you like the size and shape of your body now, you may not want to lose weight. Studies show that many African Americans know the health benefits of good nutrition and regular physical activity.

Yet, friends and family may feel that you look great and don't need to change how you eat or exercise. Their love for you is real, but only you can decide to improve your health. After you start to slim down, your friend or spouse may want to join you on the journey to better health.

If you are at a healthy weight now, stay there. Try to keep from gaining weight as you get older. Staying at a healthy weight may help you to feel good, have energy all day, each day, and avoid some health problems.

Do I need to change how I eat and exercise?

You may need to change how you eat and exercise if you are:

- a man whose waist measures more than 40 inches, or
- a woman whose waist measures more than 35 inches.

Men and women whose waist measurements are greater than these are at higher risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

You also may need to change how you eat and exercise if you are:

- in the moderate or severe overweight shaded areas on the weight-for-height chart, or
- having health problems such as high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, or diabetes, or
- at risk because your mom, dad, sister, or brother is overweight and suffers from weight-related health problems such as diabetes or high blood pressure.

You may just need to continue your current healthy eating habits and physical activity habits if you:

- are within the healthy range on the weight-for-height chart,
- have gained less than 10 pounds since you reached your adult height, and are otherwise healthy and physically fit.

Why am I overweight?

You may become overweight when you eat more calories than the amount of energy you use, or burn. What causes your body to store more calories than it needs is unclear. Research shows that you may be overweight for many reasons. Some reasons include:

- lack of physical activity
- eating too many high-fat or high-calorie foods
- genetic factors (if your mom, dad, sister, or brother is overweight, you may be more likely to be overweight)
- health problems such as hypothyroidism (underactivity of the thyroid gland) and certain problems related to the nervous system
- taking certain drugs that may cause weight gain, such as steroids and some antidepressants
- eating when bored, sad, or angry
- eating large amounts of food and feeling a loss of control (binge eating).



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How do I start to lose weight and improve my life?

If you are overweight and have a health problem linked to being overweight, you should try to lose weight.

Here are some steps to help you begin to lose weight and improve your health:

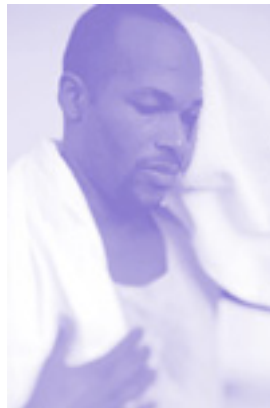
- Talk to your doctor or health care provider before trying to lose weight.
- Eat less high-calorie food and increase your physical activity. (Experts recommend that you do at least 30 minutes of physical activity of moderate intensity on most, if not all, days of the week.)
- Eat a variety of foods: whole-grain products, vegetables, fruits, protein-rich plant foods (tofu, dry beans such as red beans, navy beans, and soybeans), and protein-rich animal foods such as lean meat, poultry, fish, and eggs*.
- Use fats and oils (such as high-fat salad dressing) in small amounts (no more than 2 tablespoons).
- Eat salted (cured) foods in small amounts, if at all, if you have high blood pressure.
- Eat small amounts of sugary foods (like candy and soft drinks).
- Avoid weight-loss diets that severely limit calories or types of food.
- Try to lose 1/2 to 1 pound a week.
- Keep a journal to see the progress you are making.
- Allow for setbacks—you are only human.
- Be patient—improving how you eat and exercise takes

time.

*If you do not eat animal products, you can still eat a healthy vegetarian diet that is consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and meets Recommended Dietary Allowances for nutrients.

How can I keep improving my health?

Now that you have begun to lose weight and improve the overall quality of your life, you will want to keep your new habits. Here are some more physical activity and eating tips and changes that may help you stay on the path to better health.



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Tips for Active Women

Being active doesn't

mean you have to ruin

your hair.

Whether you wear your

hair natural, relaxed,

braided, weaved, or

locked—you can be active and still keep a

beautiful hairstyle. Talk

to your hairstylist to

learn what's best for

your hair texture and

Be more active

If you are physically active for 30 minutes at least three times a week, strive for 30 minutes at least 5 days a week. **Moderate** activities to try include*:

- washing and waxing your car for 45-60 minutes
- bicycling 5 miles in 30 minutes
- dancing fast for 30 minutes
- pushing a stroller 1 1/2 miles in 30 minutes.

More vigorous activities to try include*:

- walking the stairs for 15 minutes
- running 1 1/2 miles in 15 minutes
- walking 2 miles in 30 minutes
- playing basketball (or another game) for 15–20 minutes
- jumping rope for 15 minutes.

*Activities and time measurements are from *Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General*, 1996.

Try to get a friend or family member to be physically active with you. Exercise may seem easier and be more fun when you have company!

If you haven't been exercising, start slowly by just stretching or walking for a short time for the first couple of days. To learn more about walking and stretching, read WIN's pamphlet *Walking . . . A Step in the Right Direction*.

**length and follow a
hair
care routine that fits
your active lifestyle.**

Eat healthier

If you have started to improve your eating habits by eating fewer calories and fats, here are some more changes you can make:

- Eat a variety of nutritious, lowfat foods.
- Try to eat different foods from each group in the Food Guide Pyramid (see next page).
- Try to eat small meals and eat only when you are hungry. Stop eating before you feel full.
- Choose lower calorie snacks such as apples and bananas.
- Drink less or no beer and other alcoholic beverages.
- Drink eight glasses of water each day.
- Eat food slowly and chew well.
- Try to eat meals at the table while socializing with your family—not in front of the television or on the go.



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Food Guide Pyramid



Note: A range of servings is given for each group. The smaller number is for people who consume about 1,600 calories a day, such as inactive women. The larger number is for those who eat about 2,800 calories a day, such as teenage boys, active men, and very active women.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

What Counts as a Serving?

Bread, Cereal, Rice, & Pasta Group

- 1 slice of bread
- 1 ounce of ready-to-eat cereal
- 1/2 cup of cooked cereal, rice, or pasta

Vegetable Group

- 1 cup of raw leafy vegetables
- 1/2 cup of other vegetables—cooked or chopped raw
- 3/4 cup of vegetable juice

Fruit Group

- 1 medium apple, banana, or orange
- 1/2 cup of chopped, cooked, or canned fruit
- 3/4 cup of fruit juice

Milk, Yogurt, & Cheese Group

- 1 cup of milk or yogurt
- 1 1/2 ounces of natural cheese
- 2 ounces of processed cheese (1 ounce is about the size of your thumb)

Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, & Nuts Group

- 2-3 ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish (3 ounces is about the size of a deck of cards)
- 1/2 cup of cooked dry beans or 1 egg counts as 1 ounce of lean meat. Two tablespoons of peanut butter or 1/3 cup of nuts counts as 1 ounce of meat.

To enjoy tasty, lowfat and low-calorie versions of some favorite foods, you may wish to make the changes on the

next page when you prepare your meals.



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**Instead of
this:**

Try this:

**Fried
chicken**

Baked, roasted, broiled, grilled, or oven-fried chicken.
Remove the skin from chicken or turkey before cooking or eating to make it less fattening.

**Fried fish or
fish packed
in oil**

Baked, broiled, or grilled fish, or fish
packed in water.

**Ham hocks,
salt pork, or
fatback to
flavor
vegetables**

Onions, garlic, low-sodium chicken broth or bouillon,
smoked turkey, turkey bacon, or turkey ham. (These meats
are high in salt, so use sparingly if you have high blood
pressure.)

**French fries
or
onion rings**

Mashed potatoes with lowfat or nonfat milk, or baked
potatoes topped with salsa or light or nonfat sour cream.

**Regular
ground beef**

Extra lean ground beef or ground turkey.

**Potato chips,
cakes, pies,
cookies,
soda, or
candy**

Graham crackers, animal crackers, air-popped popcorn,
bagels, fruit, raisins, rice cakes, or yogurt. (If you want to eat
lowfat cookies, try gingersnaps or fruit bars.)

**Butter or
lard**

Spray pans with nonstick cooking spray or use small
amounts of olive oil, canola oil, or other liquid vegetable oil.
(Oil is not less fattening, but it is better for your heart!)

**Instead of
this:**

Try this:

**Whole milk
or cheese**

Lowfat or nonfat milk (such as skim milk or evaporated skim milk, powdered milk, or buttermilk), soy milk, or lowfat or nonfat cheese.

Sour cream

Lowfat or nonfat sour cream or yogurt (or half sour cream and half yogurt), or light cream cheese.

**Salad
dressing
(regular)**

Lowfat or nonfat salad dressing, or flavored vinegar (such as tarragon vinegar or balsamic vinegar).

**Mayonnaise
(regular)**

Mustard or lowfat mayonnaise on sandwiches. Nonfat or lowfat dressing, yogurt, or mayonnaise in salads and casseroles.

**Avocados or
olives to
garnish
salads**

Fruits and vegetables without fat (such as grapes, tomatoes, peppers, and mushrooms).

**Canned fruit
packed in
heavy syrup**

Canned fruit packed in light syrup or juice.

**Salty or
creamed
soups**

Lowfat and low-sodium soups.

Salt

Herbs, spices, lemon, lime, or vinegar. (Salt isn't fattening, but it may contribute to high blood pressure in some people.)

CAN YOU DRINK MILK?

If you are lactose-intolerant (you can't digest foods with lactose in them), you may be able to eat small servings of dairy products, or try products made for people with lactose intolerance.

(Lactose is the sugar found in milk and foods made with milk.)

If you are sensitive to some dairy foods, you may be able to eat others such as yogurt, hard cheese (like cheddar), evaporated skim milk, and buttermilk.

If you must avoid dairy products, you can still get the calcium your body

Keeping your new habits

The path to improving your eating and physical activity habits is not easy. Along the way, you may drink sodas or eat potato chips. It's OK to have these snacks once in a while. But try to keep fruits and vegetables on hand, too, for a healthier snack.

Don't give up. Remember, sensible eating and physical activity habits, followed over time, are key to a healthy body, mind, and spirit!



Additional Reading

Inclusion of materials or organizations is for information only and does not imply endorsement by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases or WIN.

Do You Know the Health Risks of Being Overweight?

NIH Publication No. 98-4098.

This pamphlet describes the health risks associated with being overweight, how losing weight can reduce these risks, and how to lose weight by improving one's eating habits and becoming more physically active. 1998, 10 pages. Available from WIN.

Weight Loss for Life.

NIH Publication No. 98-3700.

This booklet provides information for adults about how to maintain a healthy weight to prevent disease and promote well-being. It describes the different types of weight-loss programs and important elements of a successful weight-loss plan. 1998, 19 pages. Available from WIN.

Physical Activity and Weight Control.

NIH Publication No. 96-4031.

This fact sheet describes physical activity and its role in health and weight loss. It also describes different types of physical activity and provides tips on how to become more physically active. 1996, 4 pages. Available from WIN.



This brochure describes lactose intolerance and how to manage it. 1998, 13 pages. Available from the National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse; Tel: (301) 654-3810.

Heart-Healthy Home Cooking African American Style.

NIH Publication No. 97-3792.

This pamphlet tells how to prepare your favorite African American dishes in ways that will help protect you and your family from heart disease and stroke. These 20 tested recipes show you how to cut back on saturated fat, cholesterol, and salt and still have great-tasting food. Delicious foods from spicy southern barbecued chicken to sweet potato pie are included. 1997, 28 pages. Available from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute for \$2.50; Tel: (301) 592-8573.

Down Home Healthy Cookin'.

This pamphlet features 14 tested recipes for traditional African American foods modified to be low in fat and high in fiber—but still tasty. Nutrition content and healthy cooking tips are provided for each recipe. Recipes include garlic mashed potatoes, 20-minute chicken creole, catfish stew, New Orleans red beans, and old-fashioned bread pudding. Reprinted 1996, 16 pages. Available from the National Cancer Institute; Tel: (800) 4-CANCER.

Low-Fat Soul.

Jonell Nash. Ballantine Books, 1998. This book, written by the food editor of *Essence* magazine, offers the traditions and flavors of favorite soul dishes without the calories and fat. It presents more than 130 recipes, each with a nutritional analysis, plus "fat chats," a selection of cooking tips to help avoid unnecessary calories, cholesterol, and fat. Available from your local bookstore.

Down-Home Wholesome: 300 Low-Fat Recipes from a New Soul Kitchen.

Danella Carter. E.P. Dutton, 1996. This health-conscious soul-food cookbook offers wholesome recipes, free of red meat and pork, for over 300 dishes. All recipes include a complete nutritional analysis. Available from your local bookstore.

Additional Resources

The following organizations have additional information.

<http://zwebspot.com/doctor/>

Office of Minority Health Resource Center

P.O. Box 37337
Washington, DC 20013
Toll-free Tel:
(800) 444-6472
TDD: (301) 589-0951
Internet:
www.omhrc.gov

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Information Center

P.O. Box 30105
Bethesda, MD 20824
Tel: (301) 592-8573
Internet:
www.nhlbi.nih.gov

Food and Drug Administration Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition

200 C Street, SW
HFS-165
Washington, DC 20204
Internet:
www.cfsan.fda.gov

American Dietetic Association

216 West Jackson
Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60606
Toll-free Tel:

(800) 366-1655
Internet:
www.eatright.org

**International Food
Information Council
Publications**

Department
1100 Connecticut
Avenue, NW,
Suite 430
Washington, DC 20036
Tel: (202) 296-6540
Internet:
ificinfo.health.org

The following organizations have information on size acceptance available to the public. Some of these organizations offer support and referral services to overweight individuals.

**Council on Size and
Weight Discrimination,
Inc.**

P.O. Box 305
Mount Marion, NY
12456
Tel: (914) 679-1209
Fax: (914) 679-1206

**National Association
to Advance Fat
Acceptance**

P.O. Box 188620
Sacramento, CA 95818
Tel: (916) 558-6880
Internet: www.naafa.org

