

### A Healthy Weight has Great Health Benefits!

- ✓ Decreased risk of heart disease
- ✓ Decreased risk for type 2 diabetes
- ✓ Decreased risk for breathing problems while you sleep (obstructive sleep apnea)
- ✓ Decreased risk for many cancers
- ✓ Feeling better and having more energy

**It is never too late to start!**



### Balance Food and Activity for a Healthy Weight

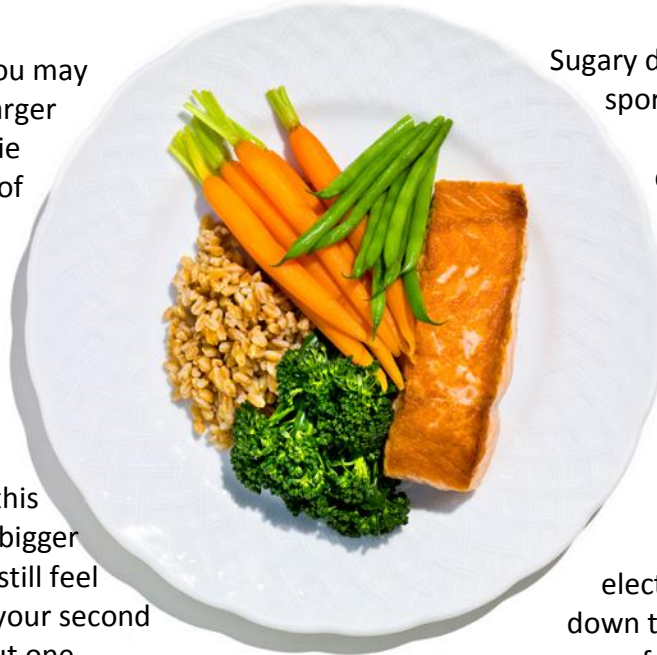
Eating healthy foods is important for your wellness, but losing weight really depends on the **amount** of food you are eating over time. If you eat more calories than your body needs on most days, those calories are stored as fat. The **only** way to lose weight is to eat less than what your body burns for fuel. This causes your body to turn to the stored calories (fat) for fuel.

### Helpful Tips for a Healthy Weight

It is best to work on changing only 1–2 behaviors at a time. The key is not to think that you are “going on a diet.” Your goal is to learn life-long habits and make changes that will last.

#### Do not skip meals, especially

**breakfast.** If you skip a meal, you may feel very hungry and may eat larger amounts of high-fat, high-calorie foods later. Eat within an hour of waking up, and again about every 4 hours (small meals). You should also avoid eating too late in the evening (about 2 hours before bedtime).



#### Eat smaller amounts at meals

**and snacks.** A great way to do this is to eat off a smaller plate (no bigger than 9 inches) at meals. If you still feel hungry, choose vegetables for your second serving. For snacks, measure out one portion to avoid over-snacking.

#### At mealtimes, fill at least ½ your plate with vegetables.

Start with a salad of leafy, green vegetables with no more than one tbsp dressing. Fill at least half your plate with vegetables. Non-starchy vegetables are filling and have a lot of fiber, vitamins, and minerals.

#### Do not drink your calories.

Sugary drinks like soda, juice, lemonade, sport drinks, and sweetened coffees have many calories. It is best to drink water. Coffee and tea with no sugar are okay. Calorie-free flavors added to water or diet soda *on occasion* are okay, too. Limit skim or low-fat milk to no more than about 2 cups (16 ounces) per day.

#### Eat mindfully.

Reduce distractions and be “present” while eating. Turn off electronics, put away papers, and sit down to your meal. You will enjoy your food more and you may eat LESS.

#### Move your body every day.

Physical activities that make your heart beat faster will help you reach a healthy weight and keep your heart healthy. Increase your current activity level slowly with a goal of at least 30 minutes most days of the week.

A registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) can help you make a heart-healthy meal plan that works best for your lifestyle and support you in your nutrition journey. Talk with an RDN for the answers to your nutrition questions.