



## **DIET FOCUSED WEIGHT MANAGEMENT**

Focus on diet, not exercise, to obtain or maintain healthy body weight. Exercise has many wonderful benefits, and we highly recommend it for stress management, cardiovascular health, and musculoskeletal health. We do not recommend exercise as the main strategy for weight loss, however. For most people, over 80% of weight loss is due to proper eating, not exercise! This is good news. Many people, for various reasons, cannot engage in a routine exercise program. Yet, almost everyone can achieve a healthy body weight by eating better food and less calories.

1. Determine healthy body weight. There are a number of formulas to determine this. The website [www.calculator.net/ideal-weight-calculator.html](http://www.calculator.net/ideal-weight-calculator.html) offers the most popular formulas. All you need to do is enter your age, gender, and height. You will get slightly different numbers from the different formulas. Pick the one you like the best.
2. Calculate daily caloric intake. Go to [www.calculator.net/calorie-calculator.html](http://www.calculator.net/calorie-calculator.html) and enter your age, gender, height, healthy body weight, and activity level. It's best to enter Sedentary or Lightly Active for activity level. This is the approximate number of calories you should consume in an average day.
3. Budget your calories. We need to "buy" all our daily nutrition without over spending on calories. Over-eating, even by a small amount, can have drastic consequences. If you over spend by only 250 calories a day for a year, you will gain about 26 pounds. So it is imperative to not blow your budget on nutrient-poor, calorie-dense foods.
4. Develop a personal strategy to maintain your calorie budget. This requires time, commitment, and effort. You are developing a new skill and will need to discover what strategies work for you. It may be as simple as keeping a food diary (dieting apps like MyFitnessPal and others can help). Free calorie counters are available on the Internet. In some cases, developing and maintaining your personal strategy may require the assistance of your primary care doctor or consultation with a dietitian or counselor.

## **SPECIFIC DIETS**

Many different diets can be effective for weight loss. There are popular options like low carb, low fat, low glycemic, Mediterranean, mixed/balanced (DASH), Paleolithic, vegan, and many others. I have studied the literature and find that my opinions line up well with the founder of the Yale Center for Preventative Research, Dr. David Katz: There is no clear winner by the evidence.

<http://www.davidkatzmd.com/default.aspx>.

The best diet advice seems to be: *eat real food, not too much, mostly plants*. *Real food* means avoiding highly processed food products. We should eat things that are recognizably “food” to someone from the 1800s, not things that come from shiny packages with a long list of processed ingredients. *Not too much* means avoiding excess calorie intake of any sort. Eat enough to enjoy the flavors and textures and to satisfy the hunger. Don’t eat more than you need. *Mostly plants* means avoiding *excess* protein and fat intake from animal sources, which is associated with an increased risk of chronic diseases. Two simple strategies to consider:

### **Plant Based Diets**

This is a very safe, effective strategy for long term healthy eating. Plants have been the foundation of most diets for thousands of years of human history. In the last 75 years our Western Diet been utterly transformed by the tremendous availability of industrially produced food (mainly carbs) and abundant meat protein sources. The unfortunate result has been huge increases in obesity, diabetes, osteoarthritis, cancer, and other chronic disease. For more information:

Search the Internet for “plant based diet”. There is abundant information available. Watch the documentary Forks over Knives. (Available on Netflix and other sites).

See the website: <http://www.forksoverknives.com/what-to-eat/>

### **Intermittent Fasting (IF) Diets (5:2 diet)**

Some people do very well with the blend of flexibility and discipline provided by intermittent fasting (really “partial fasting” or “intermittent calorie restriction”). It can be very effective for weight loss but you should consult your primary care doctor first. For more information:

Watch the BBC Documentary film “Eat, Fast & Live Longer”. It is available on the Internet at: [http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xvdbtt\\_eat-fast-live-longer-hd\\_shortfilms](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xvdbtt_eat-fast-live-longer-hd_shortfilms)

Go to the website: <http://thefastdiet.co.uk/why-fast/> and read the FAQ section to review the question about “who is advised *not* to do IF?”

### **Inspiration to commit to healthy living:**

Evidence shows that about 80% of all chronic diseases (heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, dementia and others) can be prevented through “lifestyle” medicine. The key elements are a healthy diet (read: avoid obesity), moderate physical activity, and no smoking. If you add proper sleep, manage life stress, and cultivate loving relationships you are nearly “disease-proof” according to Dr. Katz.

