Getting started: guidelines for shaping up

Shaping up to improve your health and well-being should not be about going on a ‘diet’ or looking for quick fix solutions. Changing your habits to improve your health requires a long-term commitment and can be achieved by:

- Making realistic and sensible changes for a healthy diet
- Being more active every day – every little bit counts!

When choosing what to eat, keep the following words in mind: enjoyment, satisfaction, variety, balance and moderation!

This information contains general guidelines regarding healthy lifestyle. It is important to seek individual advice from an Accredited Practicing Dietitian (APD).

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| **1. Aim for a gradual sustainable weight loss** | • Healthy weight loss is weight loss of about 1-4 kg/month.  
• A modest goal of losing 5-10% of your starting weight is realistic, achievable and has proven health benefits.  
• If you lose weight slowly, it is more likely to stay off.  
• Slow gradual wt loss from small changes is better and more sustainable than fast weight loss strategies that you cannot maintain.  
• Set realistic eating & physical activity goals for yourself.  
• Don’t just focus on the scales – focus on losing excess body fat. Measure your progress by your waist size, how your clothes fit & how you feel.  
• Losing weight from your waist reduces your risk of heart disease and diabetes. |
| **2. Try to eat regular meals to avoid overeating** | • Choose a meal pattern that works for you – 3 main meals or smaller, more frequent meals.  
• Always try to start the day with breakfast.  
• Plan your meals to prevent relying on quick, easy and often unhealthy foods.  
• Try not to skip meals or follow fad diets. This will lead to overeating and unsustainable eating habits. Successful eating habits need to be easy to stick to and enjoyable.  
• Including some form of protein at each meal can prevent hunger between meals e.g. tuna, eggs, cheese or beans.  
• Learn to recognise your body’s signals for hunger and fullness to prevent overeating. Always ask yourself if you are really hungry or just eating out of boredom. |
### 3. Avoid feeling hungry by including plenty of high fibre foods

- Aim to eat 2 serves of fruit and at least 5 serves of vegetables every day.
  - One serve of fruit is a medium piece of fruit e.g. an apple or 1 cup of canned or chopped fruit.
  - One serve of vegetables is ½ a cup of cooked vegetables, 1 cup of salad or one small potato. Try to limit starchy vegetables like potatoes and sweet potato to one serve each day.
- High fibre breads and cereals instead of low fibre options will keep you feeling fuller for longer. Choose wholemeal/wholegrain products.
- Fruit is a great sweet treat, and it comes in its own packaging. Try to have just one serve at a time.
- Choose whole fruit instead of juice or dried fruit.
- Fill half your plate with salad or vegetables.
- Vegetables also make great snacks; keep some pre-cut carrot, celery and capsicum sticks in your fridge.

### 4. Drink at least 6-8 glasses of water a day

- For general good health it is important to drink at least 8 glasses of water each day.
- Drinking plenty of water can help to keep hunger at bay.
- Try to drink a glass of water before your main meal. This will help to make you feel full and help prevent over-eating.
- Hints for drinking more water
  - Always have cold water in the fridge
  - Fill a jug or large water bottle each morning & try to finish it by the end of the day
  - Leave a glass by the tap to remind you to drink
  - Add a squeeze of lemon or a small amount of low joule cordial to give water a lift
  - Get in the habit of drinking water often
  - Carry a water bottle with you everywhere you go

### 5. Try to eat less fat

- All fats are high in energy (also known as kilojoules or calories). Eating high fat foods often leads to eating more energy than you need.
- Use only small amounts of margarine/oil when cooking or preparing foods. Try an olive oil spray or a non-stick fry pan.
- Limit the intake of high fat foods like:
  - Fatty meats (e.g. sausages, chops, bacon)
  - Butter, margarine, lard, oil, ghee
  - Full cream dairy products
  - Rich cakes, pastries, pies and chocolate
  - Fatty processed & fried takeaway
- Include low fat protein foods at each meal to prevent hunger between meals
- Lean meat, chicken & fish – trim the fat from meat & the skin from chicken (before cooking is best)
- Choose low fat & reduced fat dairy products
### 6. Try to eat less sugar

- Sugar contains no valuable nutrients but can contribute a lot of extra kilojoules/calories to the diet.
- Try to reduce your intake of high sugar foods and drinks such as lollies, chocolates, biscuits, cakes, pastries, as well as soft drinks, juice, cordial and flavoured milk.
- Try to cut down on sugar you may be adding to tea, coffee, and breakfast cereals.
- Choose lower sugar varieties of foods e.g. low sugar cereals, reduced sugar yoghurt, plain biscuits.
- Artificial sweeteners and sugar alternatives can provide a safe and low kilojoule option for sweetness.

### 7. Limit alcohol

- Alcohol should be used in moderation as it is high in kilojoules/calories and low in nutrients.
- For healthy men and women, it is recommended that you drink no more than two standard drinks on any day.
- A standard drink is:
  - A schooner (425mL) of light beer
  - A pot (285mL) of heavy beer
  - A small glass (100mL) of wine
  - A nip (30mL of spirits)

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**Physical activity**

Be sure to include regular activity in your day. Australia's *Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines* provide a good starting point.

- Doing any physical activity is better than none. Start with 5-10 minutes and gradually build up to the recommended amount.
- Be active on most, preferably all, days of the week.
- Accumulate 150 to 300 minutes of moderate or 75 to 150 minutes of vigorous intensity physical activity each week.
- Do muscle strengthening activities on at least 2 days each week.
- Sit less, more more.

### Benefits of physical activity

- Assists with weight loss by burning energy and increasing muscle which results in an increased metabolic rate.
- Improves energy levels, fitness, and mobility.
- Reduces your risk of joint and lower back pain.
- Decreases your risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, anxiety, depression, some cancers and obesity.
- Improves your mood and stress levels.
- Improves sleeping patterns.
Things I can do to improve my health

1.

2.

3.

4.

For further information contact your Dietitian or Nutritionist: