

# Losing Weight: What Does It Take?

## Losing Weight

Losing weight can be difficult and frustrating. But it is possible to lose weight and keep it off.

For many people, weight loss can be accomplished eating fewer calories and by exercising to help burn fat and calories and keep weight off. For some people, diet and exercise are not enough to lose weight or reach a reasonable weight. If you have problems losing weight with diet and exercise alone, there are medications your doctor can prescribe that help. Surgery is also an option for some people. Keep in mind there are more health risks associated with both drug therapy and surgery than with lifestyle changes.

## Diet and Portion Control

You can limit the number of calories you eat each day, without eliminating your favorite foods. You just need to know how much to cut back on the amount of food you eat. This is known as “portion control.” If you have diabetes and are overweight, shedding those extra pounds by reducing your calorie intake and eating smaller portions can help lower your blood glucose levels. To read more about portion control, see Tip Sheet #4.

## Physical Activity

Physical activity is an important part of weight management. Exercise can:

- Boost your metabolism.
- Increase muscle mass so you burn more calories.
- Help improve the body’s response to insulin and naturally help to lower glucose by burning extra calories.

Lowering blood glucose and improving the body’s response to insulin can also reduce or eliminate the need for diabetes medication for those with type 2 diabetes. See Tip Sheet #5 for more information on physical activity.

## When Diet and Exercise Are Not Enough

Sometimes, people who are severely overweight are unable to lose weight with diet and exercise alone. If you are one of these people, you may benefit from prescription weight loss drugs or surgery.

Most prescription weight loss drugs work by making you feel less hungry. Weight loss drugs are not recommended for those who are mildly overweight unless there are other health problems, such as diabetes or heart disease. Not everyone responds the same way to weight loss drugs, and some people lose more weight than others.

Surgery may be a weight loss option for people with:

- BMI greater than 40.
- BMI 35-40 who also have other health risks such as type 2 diabetes.

One of the benefits of this type of weight loss approach is that people usually experience rapid weight loss right after the surgery. However there are risks associated with surgery that include surgical complications, gall stones, and problems absorbing nutrients.

Your health care provider can help you determine if a prescription weight loss medication or surgery is right for you.

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