

# A balanced approach to losing weight

The key is following a lifestyle that includes healthy eating, regular exercise, and balancing the number of calories you eat with the number of calories your body uses. Talk to your healthcare provider about what may be right for you.

## Make a commitment

- Sign a written contract with yourself. Write down:
  - How much weight you want to lose
  - The date you want to lose the weight by
  - Your plan for getting regular exercise
  - Why you want to lose weight
- Post your contract where you can see it every day (like the refrigerator door)

## Know your starting place

- Keep a food diary for a few days. Write down everything you eat or drink, including snacks. You'll become aware of what you eat and when. This will help you see what you might want to change

## Identify challenges

- Do work, school, or family make it hard to find time to exercise?
- Do you eat fatty or sugary food because that's what is in the house?
- Are you tempted at work by donuts or snacks in the break room?
- Think about how you will meet these challenges, and write down your plan

## Set your goals

- Be specific. Saying "I will walk 20 minutes 3 times a week" is specific. "I will exercise more" is not
- Be realistic. Make your goal achievable. Deciding to walk or jog for 15 minutes 3 times a week is realistic. Planning to run a marathon in 30 days may not be
- Be forgiving. If you ate that donut you meant to avoid, don't give up and return to your old ways. Commit to getting back on track quickly, and think about how you might handle this next time

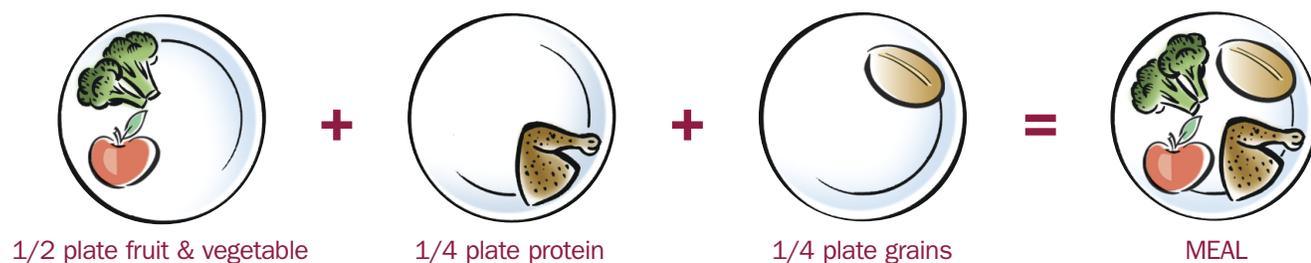
## Focus on the foods you *can* have...not the ones you can't

- Eat more fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains
- Drink fat-free or low-fat milk

- Eat lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts
- Eat fresh foods that are steamed, baked, grilled, broiled, or stir-fried
- Avoid saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt, and added sugars
- Eat slowly, enjoy your food, and learn when you feel full

## Portion control

- Use smaller plates
- Plan meals ahead to ensure balanced plates
- What does a balanced plate look like?



- Make sure you are eating a *single serving* of each food on your plate. If you want seconds, choose more fruit or vegetables
- What does a serving size look like?

A guide to single servings	
	1 cup of cereal = a fist
1/2 cup of cooked rice, pasta, or potato =	1/2 baseball
1/2 cup fresh fruit =	1/2 baseball
3 ounces meat or poultry =	deck of cards
1/2 cup ice cream =	1/2 baseball
2 ounces peanut butter =	ping-pong ball

**Talk to your healthcare provider about the right weight-loss plan for you.**