

LOSING WEIGHT

To lose weight you need to use up more energy (calories) than your body takes in from food and drink.

Eating and drinking fewer calories combined with more physical activity achieves the best results.

The major nutrients which provide energy are carbohydrates, protein and fat. Alcohol also supplies energy but no nutrients.

1 gram of fat = 9 kcals

1 gram of carbohydrates = 4 kcals

1 gram of protein = 4 kcals

1 gram of alcohol = 7 kcals



Guidelines for losing weight

Trying to lose weight does not mean starving yourself! Enjoy your food and eat a variety of foods. It is not just the quality – the quantity matters too.

- Reduce the total amount of food you eat each day, especially fatty and high calorie foods
- Make sure that most of your energy comes from the Carbohydrate foods. This group includes bread, potatoes, chapatis, pasta, rice and other cereals. These starchy foods do not contain too many calories unless you add fat to them! Where possible, try to choose wholemeal or wholegrain products as these contain more fibre
- Eat plenty of vegetables, salads and fruits. If you eat tinned fruit, choose those that are in natural juices rather than in syrup
- If you eat meat, choose lean cuts and trim off any visible fat. Chicken and turkey (without the skin) and fish contain less fat than red meat, so eat these more often. 1 – 2 servings of oily fish is particularly recommended per week to help make the blood less “sticky” and therefore less likely to clot
- Any pulses (e.g. beans, lentils) are low in fat and high in fibre and so make excellent choices
- Cut down on your total fat intake (see fact sheet on “What Steps can I take to reduce my Fat Intake”)
- Reduce the amount of sugar in your diet. Sugary foods include fizzy drinks, sweets, biscuit, cakes, chocolates, sugar and honey
- Remember – all alcoholic drinks are high in calories

For dietary advice tailed to your individual needs, ask your GP to refer you to a State Registered Dietitian.

Aim to increase your activity levels gradually and try to exercise for at least 30 minutes, five times a week, e.g. walking, digging in the garden or cycling are just some of the activities you can try and build into your everyday life.