

Tips for Teens with Diabetes

# Stay at a Healthy Weight

National Diabetes Education Program



Staying at a healthy weight is good for everyone. It is really important if you have diabetes. Set goals to reach and stay at a healthy weight.

Staying at a healthy weight when you are young may help you control your weight for life!

Check out some great weight loss tips ➔

# Be slow and steady in your weight loss!

## Why is it good to be at a healthy weight?

Staying at a healthy weight as a teen may help you control your weight for life. Being at a healthy weight helps you feel fit, stay well, and feel good about the way you look. It can also help prevent health problems like heart disease and high blood pressure. **If you have diabetes and are overweight, weight loss may improve your blood glucose** (GLOO-kos), also called blood sugar, and make your diabetes easier to manage.



be active

## How can I get to a healthy weight?

If your doctor says that you should not gain more weight or that you should lose weight, you need to get more physical activity every day and eat fewer calories. Ask a dietitian or diabetes educator to:

- help you decide what kinds of activities might fit into your busy life as a teen
- help you and your family create a well-balanced meal plan and make healthy food choices



### Here are some things to try

- 1 Be active every day for at least 60 minutes.** This will help you burn up extra calories and get fit. Invite some friends over to dance to your favorite music. Play a sport or go for a bike ride instead of playing computer games or going to the movies. Ask a friend or family member to join you on a walk instead of watching TV after school.
- 2 Cut some calories.** The number of calories shows how much energy a food supplies. Calories that are not used up are stored as body fat. Calories are listed on food labels. Get in the habit of reading food labels. If you cut 100 to 200 calories a day, it can make a big difference.

If you:	You could cut about:
Drink water instead of regular soda or a sweetened fruit drink	<b>150 calories</b>
Eat a piece of fruit instead of a candy bar or a bag of chips	<b>200 calories</b>
Eat a small serving of french fries or share a big one	<b>250 calories</b>
Eat one half cup of sugar-free, nonfat pudding instead of regular ice cream	<b>150 calories</b>

- 3 Eat smaller amounts of food for meals and snacks.**

Try raw vegetables or fruit for a snack. To avoid “grazing,” measure out your snacks for the day into baggies that are easy to carry.

If you eat less and are more physically active, you should lose about one or two pounds a month—and feel great. **It is best to lose weight a little at a time** because you are still growing. If you lose weight slowly, you are more likely to keep it off.

## What are some healthy eating tips I can try?

- **Take your time when you eat.** It takes about 15 minutes for your stomach to tell your brain that you are full. So... wait 15 minutes before eating second helpings.
- Ask if you can **help plan, make, or shop for the family meals** sometimes.
- **Drink a glass of water** before you eat.
- **Fill up half of your plate with salad or vegetables.** Use small amounts of low-fat salad dressing, mayonnaise, or margarine.
- If you like to eat sugary foods, sweets, desserts, or candy, eat only a small serving at the end of a meal and not every day... then take an extra walk. The less you eat them, the less you may crave them!



### Very low-calorie diets are not healthy for teens.

If you do not eat enough of the right kinds of food, you may not grow or develop properly. Never make a drastic change in what you eat without talking with your dietitian or doctor. They can help you determine the right amounts of food to keep you healthy and happy.

## What about breakfast?

- **Breakfast is a great way to start your day.** It will help you focus and pay attention in school throughout the day.
- Have one bowl of whole grain cereal with nonfat or low-fat milk or yogurt and a piece of fruit.
- When you do not have much time, try a couple of whole grain crackers or slices of bread with a tablespoon of natural peanut butter, a hard-boiled egg, or a piece of low-fat cheese, along with a glass of nonfat or low-fat milk.

## What about school lunches?

If you buy your lunch at school, try to steer clear of fried foods. Choose:

- small deli sandwiches or subs made with lean turkey, chicken without the skin, or beef with mustard or a little low-fat mayonnaise
- nonfat or low-fat milk instead of chocolate milk
- a piece of fresh fruit instead of cookies or cake

If there is a salad bar, choose a variety of fresh vegetables and fruits. Use a small amount of low-calorie dressing.

**Pack lunch at home the night before to save time.**

- Use leftovers from dinner.
- Make a tuna sandwich.
- Add raw carrots and a piece of fruit.



eat slowly



drink lots of water

## Can I still have a snack?

Most teens need a snack after school. The trick is not eating too much. Use a small plate or bowl for your snack to help you control the portion size. It is best not to snack while watching TV or at the computer—it is easy to lose track and eat too much.

Here are some healthy snack ideas:

- A piece of fresh fruit.
- A cup of veggies served with some salsa or a little low-fat salad dressing.
- A small bowl of whole grain cereal with nonfat or low-fat milk.
- A small bowl of vegetable soup and a few crackers.
- One small tortilla with one or two slices of low-fat cheese or turkey.
- Three cups of low-fat microwave popcorn or a single serving bag.
- One handful of pretzels or crackers.
- Drink a couple of glasses of water with your snack.



don't eat too much

## Can I eat at fast-food restaurants?

Sure, but not every day. When you do, try these ideas:

- Don't "super-size" it! Order smaller, kid-sized meals and drink water or nonfat or low-fat milk. Share a larger meal with a friend.
- Choose a grilled chicken sandwich or a simple hamburger rather than a burger covered with sauce, cheese, and bacon. Add a small baked potato with a little butter or sour cream or a small serving of fries.
- If you are eating pizza, order thin or medium crust instead of deep dish or stuffed crust. Eat only one or two slices of plain cheese or vegetable pizza. Add a salad with a little low-fat dressing.
- Try a small bag or a handful of baked chips or pretzels instead of regular chips.

**Reaching and staying at a healthy weight while you are a teen helps you stay fit as you get older.** Encourage family members and friends to get fit too by making healthy food choices and joining you in physical activity.



**Learn more!**

**Check out...**

**National Diabetes Education Program**

to get free copies of other tip sheets for teens

- *What is Diabetes?*
- *Be Active*
- *Make Healthy Food Choices*
- *Dealing With the Ups and Downs of Diabetes*
- *Lower Your Risk for Type 2 Diabetes*

[www.ndep.nih.gov](http://www.ndep.nih.gov) • 1-800-860-8747

**American Association of Diabetes Educators**

to find a diabetes educator near you

[www.diabeteseducator.org](http://www.diabeteseducator.org)

1-800-338-DMED (1-800-338-3633)

**American Diabetes Association** for help to manage diabetes

[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383)

**American Dietetic Association** to find a dietitian near you

[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org) • 1-800-366-1655

**Bam! Body and Mind** website for help to stay healthy  
[www.cdc.gov/bam](http://www.cdc.gov/bam)

**Children With Diabetes** website for more about kids and families with diabetes  
[www.childrenwithdiabetes.com](http://www.childrenwithdiabetes.com)

**Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International** for help to manage diabetes

[www.jdrf.org](http://www.jdrf.org) • 1-800-223-1138

**National Association for Health and Fitness** that promotes physical activity

[www.physicalfitness.org](http://www.physicalfitness.org) • 1-716-583-0521

**NIDDK Health Information** for more about diabetes  
[www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information](http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information) • 1-800-860-8747

**Nutrition and Physical Activity** website for healthy eating tips and the Kids Walk to School Program  
[www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/publications](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/publications)

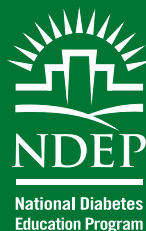
**WIN – Weight-control Information Network** for weight control help

- *Take Charge of Your Health! A Teenager's Guide to Better Health*

[www.win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/take\\_charge.htm](http://www.win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/take_charge.htm)  
1-800-860-8747

**Special thanks to the teens who helped create this tip sheet**

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[www.ndep.nih.gov](http://www.ndep.nih.gov)

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