

Weight management self-help ideas

Are you eating regular meals every 4-6hours?

If not, consider making some gradual changes to improve the regularity of your meals.

It may be easier to start with something small such as a piece of fruit or pot of yoghurt and build on this as it gets easier.

Some people skip breakfast because they think it'll help them lose weight. But a healthy breakfast high in fibre and low in fat, sugar and salt can form part of a balanced diet and can help you get the nutrients you need for good health.

A wholegrain lower sugar cereal with semi-skimmed milk and fruit sliced over the top is a tasty and healthier breakfast.

How big are your portion sizes?

If you think your portion sizes are on the large side, could you try using smaller plates or bowls?

If you feel uncomfortably full after eating, try leaving a few mouthfuls at the end of your meal. This gets easier with practice.

If you find it difficult to leave food on the plate, consider cooking a bit less in the first place.

Are you doing something else at the same time as eating?

When eating, try focusing solely on the food. Try turning off the TV or putting down your favourite book or game.

You can also try thinking about:

- How does the food look, smell and taste?
- How does the texture of the food change as you continue chewing?
- Does your enjoyment of the food depend on your mood?

Are you actually hungry or is it a craving?

- Did you only start wanting the food because you'd seen it, smelled it, thought about it? In which case, it's likely to be a craving.
- Is your 'hunger' for a very specific food? If the answer is a 'yes' then you are likely experiencing a craving.
- Cravings start to reduce after 20minutes. Is there something else you can do to distract yourself for 20 minutes? Some people have found having a bath, painting their nails, doing some gardening or cleaning, or doing something on the computer helpful.
- Some people confuse hunger with thirst or cravings – Try a glass of water first.
- It can also be helpful to not only think about what you are eating, but why. Some people find themselves eating when bored, tired or feeling down.

How long does it take you to eat a meal?

It takes about 20 minutes for your brain to register that your stomach is full. If you eat very quickly, then you can get through a lot of food in that time!

A few suggestions to help slow down your eating include:

- Try sitting at a table and use cutlery for your meals.
- Cut your food into smaller pieces.
- Try chewing each mouthful at least 20 times.
- Try putting cutlery down in between mouthfuls.

Base your meals on higher fibre starchy carbohydrates

We did not want to list too much in this document about the food choices, since these webinars do it so well and we strongly recommend you have a look at them:

<https://patientwebinars.co.uk/condition/weight-management/>

Starchy carbohydrates should make up just over a third of the food you eat. They include potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and cereals.

Choose higher fibre or wholegrain varieties, such as wholewheat pasta, brown rice or potatoes with their skins on.

They contain more fibre than white or refined starchy carbohydrates and can help you feel full for longer.

Try to include at least 1 starchy food with each main meal. Some people think starchy foods are fattening, but gram for gram the carbohydrate they contain provides fewer than half the calories of fat.

Keep an eye on the fats you add when you're cooking or serving these types of foods because that's what increases the calorie content – for example, oil on chips, butter on bread and creamy sauces on pasta.

Get active and be a healthy weight

As well as eating healthily, regular exercise may help reduce your risk of getting serious health conditions. It's also important for your overall health and wellbeing.

Read more about the benefits of exercise and physical activity guidelines for adults.

Being overweight or obese can lead to health conditions, such as type 2 diabetes, certain cancers, heart disease and stroke.

Most adults need to lose weight by eating fewer calories.

If you're trying to lose weight, aim to eat less and be more active. Eating a healthy, balanced diet can help you maintain a healthy weight.

Lose weight with the NHS weight loss plan, a 12-week weight loss guide that combines advice on healthier eating and physical activity.

Useful links

1. Somerset Neighbourhood Health Coaches: <https://www.somersetft.nhs.uk/nhct/> - You can refer yourselves to a weight loss coach via their email or number on this site
2. Free Health Programmes you can sign up to: <https://healthtolife.org/home>
3. NHS Choices – Live Well: www.nhs.uk/livewell/pages/livewellhub

4. Change for Life: www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/Pages/change-for-life
5. Somerset Health and Wellbeing: <https://www.healthysomerset.co.uk/weight/>
6. Somerset Activity and Sport Partnership: <https://www.sasp.co.uk/weight-management>

Useful books

1. Why We Eat (Too Much) by Andrew Jenkinson
2. Ken Goss, 2011. Beating Overeating: Using compassion focussed therapy
3. Jan Chozen Bays, 2017. Mindful Eating: A guide to rediscovering a healthy and joyful relationship with food

And Finally...

If you would like further support in losing weight, as a practice we can assist with referrals to teams such as the Health Coaches, please be in touch with us at Crown Medical Centre, if this is something you would like to consider