

Guide to Weight Loss

If you would like some practical tips on achieving and maintaining a healthy weight then this guidance sheet is for you.

Introduction

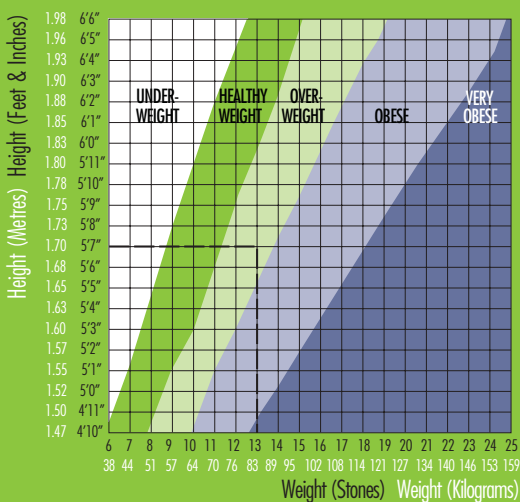
Although nobody gains weight by choice, the level of obesity has risen dramatically in Ireland. Over half of all adults are now either overweight or obese. This is quite worrying, as being overweight can be detrimental to health.






But with so many choices of diets on the market, it is hard to know where to start. The good news is that small changes to your diet and lifestyle may make all the difference. Research shows that even modest weight loss is beneficial. Gradual weight loss can have a positive impact on your health; lowering blood pressure, reducing your risk of heart disease and diabetes and improving your overall sense of wellbeing.



Know Your Weight

This chart will give you an idea of your current weight status. Simply draw a line across from your height and up from your weight to check what category you are in. If you fall in the overweight or obese category, it is important to take action in order to safeguard your long-term health. This chart can also help you monitor your progress as you lose weight.



-  **Underweight**
-  **Healthy weight**
-  **Overweight**
Losing weight will benefit your health.
-  **Obese**
It is important that you lose weight.
-  **Very Obese**
Weight loss is vital for your health.
See your doctor/dietitian for advice and support.

Weight Loss Fact File

- Total calorie intake from protein, fat, carbohydrates and alcohol, minus the calories burnt off in physical activity, will determine body weight.
- A holistic approach, incorporating a healthy balanced diet, moderate portion sizes and plenty of physical activity, is the cornerstone to successful slimming.
- A healthy balanced diet is advised for weight loss to ensure you consume enough essential vitamins and minerals. It is important not to cut out any of the food groups. Plan your diet around the four main food groups; Bread, Cereal & Potato, Fruit & Vegetables, Milk, Cheese & Yogurt and Meat, Fish & Alternatives.

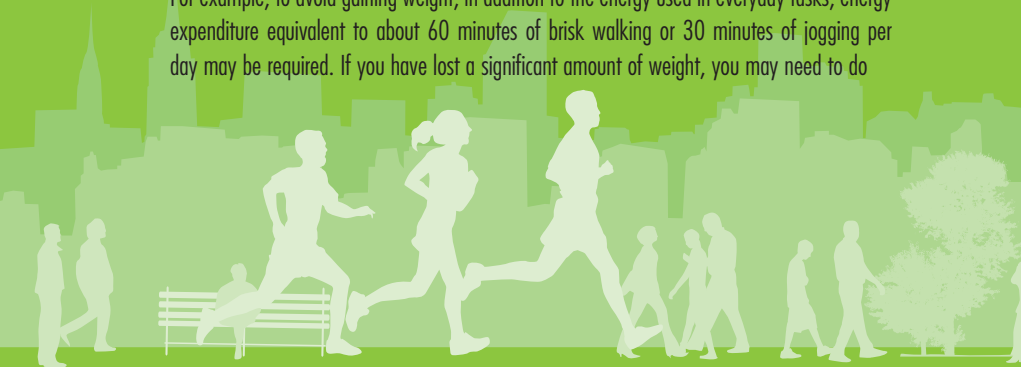


Calorie Cutters!

1. Flavour your food with garlic, herbs, spices, lemon/lime juice, relishes, pickles, vinegars, wholegrain mustard or natural yogurt. This will help you cut down on rich sauces and dressings.
2. Avoid high-sugar, high-fat snacks such as confectionery, cakes, pastries, biscuits and sugar-sweetened drinks. These provide 'empty calories', or in other words, they are typically high in calories and low in essential nutrients. Choose snacks which are low in calories and of high nutritional value such as a yogurt, salad sandwich, scone, smoothie and fresh fruit salad.
3. Choose the healthier cooking option. Boil, grill, bake, steam rather than frying foods.
4. Use fats and spreads sparingly.
5. Watch your portion sizes! This can make a big difference to your calorie intake and body weight over time. Resist the temptation to choose the larger portion size, even if it appears to be better value!

Get Going!

- Be active whenever possible! Look at your daily routine and identify where you could incorporate more physical activity. Walk or cycle instead of using the car, take the stairs instead of elevators or squeeze in a brisk walk during your lunch break.
- How long do you spend watching television or surfing the internet? Why not find a physically active hobby you enjoy instead such as jogging, swimming or a team sport?
- Guidelines published by the Department of Health & Children and the Health Service Executive in 2009 recommend that adults (18-64 yrs) engage in at least 30 minutes a day of moderate activity on five days a week (or 150 minutes a week). However, these recommendations need to be adjusted for the avoidance of weight gain or to achieve or maintain weight loss. For example, to avoid gaining weight, in addition to the energy used in everyday tasks, energy expenditure equivalent to about 60 minutes of brisk walking or 30 minutes of jogging per day may be required. If you have lost a significant amount of weight, you may need to do



60-90 minutes of moderate activity per day to maintain body weight. To lose weight, the level of physical activity required depends of numerous factors, but in general, you need to do about 1/3 more activity than the amount recommended in the general guidelines for adults - this equates to brisk walking for at least 60-75 minutes each day.

- If you are very overweight or extremely inactive; start slow. Begin with bouts of activity lasting 10 minutes or less, gradually increasing duration and then intensity. If concerned, or if you have an underlying health condition which may influence your capability to engage in physical activity, consult you GP for advice.
- Remember physical activity is essential for a healthy body weight and beneficial for long-term health and wellbeing.

Dairy and Body Weight

Some people are under the common misconception that dairy foods are fattening and are often avoided when trying to lose weight. However, dairy foods form part of a healthy weight loss diet:

- Sufficient calcium intake during weight loss may play an important role in protecting bone health during weight loss¹.
- The National Obesity Task Force stated that 'Those who meet the food pyramid requirements from the Milk, Cheese and Yogurt shelf are less likely to be obese'.
- Irish whole milk is typically standardised at 3.5% fat. Semi-skimmed must contain between 1.5-1.8% fat and skimmed milk must contain no more than 0.5% fat.
- Emerging research^{2,3} is suggesting that dairy foods play a role in body weight management.

¹ Riedt CS *et al.* American Journal of Clinical Nutrition 2007; 85: 972-980.

² Moore LL *et al.* Journal of the American College of Nutrition 2008; 27: 702-710

³ Zemel MB *et al.* International Journal of Obesity 2005; 29: 391-397

For further information contact:



The National Dairy Council,
28 Westland Square, Dublin 2.
Tel: (01) 616 9726 Fax: (01) 616 9760
Email: info@ndc.ie

www.ndc.ie

DFL 08/09