



# Suggestions for Managing Unwanted Weight Gain

**M**aintaining a good weight is important for overall physical health and psychological well-being. Most people think that when they are diagnosed with cancer they will start to lose weight and “waste away to nothing.” This is the exception rather than the rule. Some people with cancer actually gain weight through treatment. Trying to lose weight during treatment, however, is not recommended unless your doctor and dietitian agree it would be in your best interest.

Whether you gained weight through treatment or were overweight at the start of treatment, sensible weight loss efforts should start after treatment. Reaching and staying at a healthy weight after cancer treatment is worth the effort and aggravation because body weight has been shown to play a role in the occurrence of cancer (primary prevention) and possibly the recurrence of cancer (secondary prevention).

## Suggestions for Sensible Weight Reduction

1. The basic principle of weight loss involves eating fewer calories than you use. This can be done by combining a change in your diet with portion control and physical activity.
2. To lose 1 pound, you must burn 3,500 more calories than you eat. It is reasonable to try to lose 1 to 2 pounds per week.
3. A number of different weight-loss theories are currently being promoted. Some suggest you eat more fat to lose weight. Others say most calories should come from carbohydrates. Still others emphasize protein. It is very possible that effective approaches to weight loss depend on the person who uses them. Some people do well when a higher percentage of their calories comes from protein, and others may need more carbohydrates. In any case, too many calories, regardless of the source, will cause weight *gain*, not weight *loss*.

## What Type of Physical Activity Is Beneficial?\*

The American Cancer Society suggests at least 30 minutes of activity most days, if not every day of the week.

Physical activity should be convenient and fun. You do not have to do all 30 minutes at once. You can exercise for 10 minutes at a time, and get just about as much benefit.

Here are some different types of physical activity:

- ◆ Walking around a track, the neighborhood, or the local mall
- ◆ Race walking or running
- ◆ Swimming
- ◆ Biking
- ◆ Exercise classes
- ◆ Gardening or yard work
- ◆ Dancing
- ◆ Playing ball
- ◆ Martial arts
- ◆ Pilates

\*It is essential that you have good equipment and good footwear so that you do not accidentally do physical damage to your body. Be sure to talk to your doctor before starting any physical activity program.

## Sample Calculations

Body Weight	Daily Calorie Consumption		
	For Weight Loss (25 cal/kg)	For Weight Maintenance (30 cal/kg)	For Weight Gain (35 cal/kg)
100 lb (45 kg)	1,125	1,350	1,575
150 lb (68 kg)	1,700	2,040	2,380
200 lb (91 kg)	2,275	2,730	3,185
250 lb (114 kg)	2,850	3,420	3,990

Permanent weight loss is the goal. In a recent study of people who had lost weight and successfully kept it off, the researchers listed two common characteristics: most of these individuals followed a low-fat diet and they exercised regularly.

## What Is a Low-Fat Diet?

The following table shows total daily calorie levels and the corresponding number of grams of fat consumed in diets where 20% or 30% calories come from fat.

Total Daily Calorie Consumption	Fat Consumed (grams) in Diet Including 20% of Calories from Fat	Fat Consumed (grams) in Diet Including 30% of Calories from Fat
1,200	27	40
1,400	31	46
1,600	35	53
1,800	40	60
2,100	47	70
2,400	53	80

## How Many Calories Do You Need?

One quick way to learn how many calories you need involves multiplying your weight in kilograms (kg) by

- ◆ 25 calories/kg for weight loss
- ◆ 35 calories/kg for weight gain
- ◆ 30 calories/kg for weight maintenance

To calculate how much you weigh in kilograms, divide your weight in pounds (lb) by 2.2. (1 kg = 2.2 lb)

## Common Sources of Fat and Fat Content in Grams

Food (Serving Size)	Fat Content (grams)
Vegetable oil (1 tbsp)	15
Peanut butter (1 tbsp)	8
Butter or margarine (1 tsp)	5
Mayonnaise (1 tbsp)	15
Salad dressing (3 tbsp)	15
Bacon (3 slices, if 20 slices = 1 pound)	15
Cream cheese (1 tbsp)	5

## What Is a Good Weight Goal?

A good, healthy weight is defined as a body mass index (BMI) between 19 and 24. BMI measures body weight fitness. Someone in the BMI range of 25 to 30 is overweight, and a person in the BMI measures range of over 30 is obese. Consult the Body Mass Index (BMI) Weight Range Table to find your current weight and to identify your body weight goal range.

### Surgeon General's Body Mass Index (BMI) Weight Range Table

*Weight in Pounds (Weight Without Clothes)*

4'11"	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	173	198
5'	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	179	204
5'1"	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	185	211
5'2"	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	191	218
5'3"	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	197	225
5'4"	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	204	232
5'5"	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	210	240
5'6"	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	216	247
5'7"	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	223	255
5'8"	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	230	262
5'9"	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	195	203	236	270
5'10"	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	207	243	278
5'11"	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	250	286
6'	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	258	294
6'1"	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	265	302
6'2"	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	272	311
<b>BMI</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>40</b>

If you have not weighed within your recommended range within the last 10 years, talk with your health care team to identify a reasonable body weight goal. A weight loss of as little as 10% of your current weight will improve your health and reduce your risk for many chronic diseases. It is worth the effort and the aggravation!

$BMI = \text{Weight (in pounds)} \div [\text{Height (in inches)} \times \text{Height (in inches)}] \times 703$