AIM to CHANGE

HEALTH GUIDES

Americans In Motion
An American Academy of Family Physicians Initiative
HEALTH IS A STATE OF MIND AND BODY

Wellness and fitness involve being aware and making choices like being active, eating healthy and improving your emotional well-being. This is the most important investment you can make in your life. Strive for the best health you can have in all areas of your life by making mindful, healthy choices.

Benefits of Investing in You

➔ Take charge of your life and feel good about the choices you make.
➔ Gain energy and feel more fit.
➔ Experience improved physical health.
➔ Gain a positive outlook and find more enjoyment in your life.
➔ Be a role model for your family and friends.

Keep in mind that any lifestyle change is a “work in progress” and lasting changes take time. Set small goals that are easy to add to your daily life and that YOU can take charge of.
Don’t Let Stress Get You Down
We all feel stressed at times. How you react to stress will determine its effect on you. Take steps to prevent stress when you can and manage it when you can’t.

Taking Care of You
It is important to be mindful of the choices you make for your personal health and well-being. Nothing is more important than taking care of yourself. Set aside time every day for YOU—be active, enjoy hobbies and share time with your family and friends.

➡️ Strive for balance in both your personal and work life.
➡️ Make time for important relationships in your life.
➡️ Ask for help whenever you need support from others.
➡️ Find ways to relieve stress, like physical activity and relaxation techniques.
➡️ Be open-minded to try something new, like a hobby or activity.
➡️ Talk to your family doctor, who can provide resources and advice when you need it.
Parents are the most important role models. As parents, you set examples by being active, eating healthy and living a balanced lifestyle.

Commit to making healthy choices and involve your kids. Ask them what your family can do to make healthy changes in your lives.

Playtime for all ages is part of a healthy life. Take time out to have fun and connect with each other.

Have a positive attitude. Show your kids how great it feels to lead a healthy lifestyle.
SMART, HEALTHY MEALS

>({Make an effort to have more home-cooked meals. This can help encourage healthy eating and also promote more family time.}

>({Let your kids help plan what to eat. Kids love to help make meals and snacks.}

>({Keep healthy snacks on hand to help kids make good choices. Have more fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains and less chips and sweets.}

>({Teach kids to eat when they’re hungry, not when they’re bored, sad or angry. Respect their ability to know when they feel full.}

>({Breakfast helps jump start the day. It provides fuel for an active lifestyle and gives you and your child the energy to think faster and more clearly.}

>({Play “Put the Fork Down” at meals. Put your forks down between bites and take turns sharing your day.

FAMILY PLAYTIME

>({Limit screen time (TV, computer and video games). Suggest other options like reading, board games and playing outside.}

>({Enjoy the outdoors. Go to the park, ride bikes, swim or enjoy a walk around the neighborhood.}

>({Encourage participation in sports as a way to build coordination, skills and confidence.}
People sometimes turn to popular diets to achieve quick weight loss. However, for lasting changes, there are some simple keys to eating healthy.

**Balance** – Balance what you eat to meet your need for nutrition and enjoyment.

**Variety** – Enjoy all kinds of foods while keeping the key food groups in mind (like fruits & vegetables, lean sources of protein, low-fat dairy and whole grains).

**Moderation** – Focus on feeling comfortable instead of being too full after you eat. Use moderation when choosing less nutritious foods.

**Think about**…using a food & activity journal to help you understand your eating patterns and find ways to make some simple, healthy changes. Ask your family doctor about how to get started.
All Foods Fit…
Diets usually tell you WHAT you should or should not eat. Instead, focus on understanding WHY you eat in the first place.

➔ **Questions to ask when you feel like eating:**
Are you really hungry? Are you reacting to a mood (stress, boredom, anger)? Is there something else causing your urge to eat?

➔ **Rather than trying to follow “the rules” of a diet,**
BE IN CHARGE of making the best choices for you.

➔ **No foods are off limits.** Instead of looking at foods as good or bad, take a non-diet approach and remember that all foods fit when you use the keys of balance, variety and moderation.

➔ **Talk to your family doctor** to help make the best choices and create an approach that works for you.

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It is helpful to learn more about eating healthy to give your body what it needs. Visit the USDA's web site: [http://www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)
Back to Basics – Hunger signals your body when it needs to be nourished. Let hunger guide when you need to eat and how much to eat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRUE HUNGER SIGNALS</th>
<th>FALSE HUNGER SIGNALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hunger pangs, gnawing, growling or rumbling in your stomach</td>
<td>Thirst may cause you to think you are hungry—try drinking a glass of water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weakness or loss of energy</td>
<td>Cravings or urges don’t always mean you are hungry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slight headache or trouble concentrating</td>
<td>Emotions like anger, sadness or feeling lonely may trigger an urge to eat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irritability or crankiness</td>
<td>External cues like mealtimes or social events may create an urge to eat</td>
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Let Your Instincts Be Your Guide

», Relearn to listen to your hunger signals so you can determine when to eat and how much food is right for you.

», Make mindful decisions about eating by paying attention to how you feel.

», Don’t use diet “rules” to restrict what, when and how much you eat. Instead, learn to trust your body to tell you when it needs food.
I Am Hungry… So What Now?
When you are hungry and decide to eat, think about these simple questions:

What do I want?
When you are hungry something may come to mind—a certain food, flavor or texture. As you listen to your true hunger signals, you may realize what type of food or taste will satisfy you.

What do I need?
As you decide what to eat, think about what your body may need. Think of food that may be both healthy and enjoyable—instead of what is “good” or “bad.” Keep in mind balance, variety and moderation.

What do I have?
Plan ahead to have a variety of foods available as you learn to let hunger guide your choices. This way you can enjoy foods that are both satisfying and healthy.

How much do I need?
Eat enough to satisfy your hunger and stop eating before you feel too full. There is no need to clean your plate. The goal is to feel energetic and comfortable after eating.
**FIND JOY IN BEING ACTIVE**

**Move every day.** Being active is key to a healthy lifestyle and preventing chronic problems like heart disease and diabetes. Before you increase your activity level, be sure to talk to your family doctor.

**Watch energy balance.** Your weight is determined by the balance between the energy you take in (what you eat and drink) and the energy you use (physical activity).

**Every step counts.** Studies have shown that every step you take helps you manage your weight and improves your overall health. You may want to track your steps with a step counter (pedometer) to encourage you to increase your daily activity. **The more steps per day, the better.**

### How to Be More Active Every Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AT HOME</th>
<th>AT WORK</th>
<th>AT PLAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Plant a garden</td>
<td>• Walk or bike to work</td>
<td>• Play golf or shoot hoops with your kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wash your car</td>
<td>• Do stretches at your desk</td>
<td>• Take &quot;active&quot; vacations</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Walk to the mailbox</td>
<td>• Take the stairs</td>
<td>• Go hiking or bike riding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Visit a neighbor</td>
<td>• Use lunch time to take a walk</td>
<td>• Take a walk alone or with a friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Turn off the TV, turn on some music and dance</td>
<td>• Get up and move around often</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Stay Positive and Motivated...
Change is never easy. But with a little planning, patience and a positive attitude, your lifestyle can become a little healthier every day.

SOME IDEAS:

► **Choose to do something you enjoy.** Many people prefer walking—you can walk outdoors, at home on a treadmill, alone, or with friends and family.

► **Make it fun.** Listen to music or books on tape while you walk or jog. Watch TV or a video while you exercise.

► **Keep it interesting.** Try different activities like tennis, swimming, dancing, biking, team sports or yoga.

► **Write it down.** Schedule time to be active just as you would for any other important appointment.

► **Give yourself credit.** Set short-term goals and plan rewards for yourself all along the way.

► **Be flexible.** Life will sometimes get in the way of your plans. Stay flexible and get back on track right away.
ENJOYING SPECIAL EVENTS

Special events like trips and parties can be a challenge for people trying to be active and eat healthy.

- **Think** of special occasions as a chance to practice your new skills.

- **Choose** foods that will both satisfy your hunger and fuel your body.

- **Remember** balance, variety and moderation.

- **Eat** when you are hungry and stop before you feel too full.

- **Continue** to be active whenever you can. For example, go dancing or take a walk after dinner.

- **Take time** out to enjoy yourself and have fun.
TIPS TO STAY ON TRACK

When You Travel for Work or Pleasure

➤ Pack a lunch or bring healthy snacks in the car or on the plane so you can stay in charge of what you eat.

➤ Be mindful of your food choices as you enjoy eating out and trying new foods.

➤ Wear your pedometer to encourage yourself to stay active.

➤ Take advantage of the hotel’s fitness room or pool when they are available. Don’t forget to take the stairs.

➤ Ask about walking routes, walking tours and nearby hiking trails and parks.

Special Events (Parties, Holidays)

➤ It’s ok to change your routine to make room for special events and new experiences. Just keep energy balance in mind.

➤ Remember the reason for the occasion—slow down and savor the atmosphere, the company and the food for optimal enjoyment.

➤ Pay attention to your hunger signals. Eat in moderation—there is no need to ruin a great meal by feeling stuffed afterward.

➤ Get up and dance, walk around to meet new people and talk to your friends and family.
For more information visit www.familydoctor.org.

Adapted with permission from *Am I Hungry? What to Do When Diets Don’t Work.*
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