

# Weight Loss

## Patient Education Module

### 1. Eating Too Much

Counting calories is the only effective way of allotting how much food you can have at each meal and for each snack. In addition, it's also important to weigh your portions as you could be overestimating how much you are meant to eat of certain foods; test how accurate your judgment is by portioning your food as you normally would and then weigh it out afterwards. If you're consistently serving yourself generous portions, then you could be consuming A LOT more than you realize. Medications for weight loss are dangerous and addictive. Medications do not address the fundamental problem of behavior modification. In order to lose weight, you must consume less calories than your body needs in a day, this will force your body to break down fat for energy.

### 2. Not Eating Enough

You may think that less food = more weight loss, but that is really not the case; there is an ideal amount of calories that you should be eating to successfully lose weight, and getting that balance right is the key to losing weight. If you're consuming too few calories each day, your body's reaction is to think that there are lean times ahead, meaning that it will turn your metabolism down and cling onto any fat that comes its way. Thus, you are less likely to lose weight.

### 3. Not Reading Labels

It is important to read the labels on the food you consume. This is important not only for counting calories, but also so to reducing carbohydrate (sugar) and sodium (salt) intake. Making healthy food choices is a key step in weight loss as well as weight maintenance.

### 4. Not Getting Enough Sleep

Establishing a healthy diet and becoming more active will help you to shed pounds, but lifestyle factors such as getting enough sleep also play an important part in your ability to lose weight. When we lack sleep, our brains crave unhealthy easy foods, and our hormones tell us that we're hungry when we're not. This is clearly not a recipe for losing weight, so make sure to make sleep a priority and get at least 7 to 8 hours every night.

### 5. An Undiagnosed Health Issue

Your doctor should check that you are not suffering from one of the many health issues that can cause weight gain or make it difficult to lose weight. These health issues can include a vitamin or mineral deficiency, anemia, polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), diabetes, under-active thyroid, etc. If you have not been fully checked for these types of issues and you are having difficulty losing weight, then ask your doctor to evaluate you for these and other potential disorders.

### 6. Not Getting Your Vitamins

Deficiencies in vitamins and minerals lead to a sluggish metabolism and slow body processes, meaning that your body has difficulty processing the food you eat, and as a result, losing weight is more difficult. So, make sure you get the recommended daily requirements of important nutrients to see better results.

### 7. Too Stressed

Stress can be one of the underlying reasons for weight gain, so it makes sense that it's something that needs to be addressed in order to lose weight. One study found that participants taught stress-management techniques were able to lose significantly more weight than the participants who weren't taught these techniques, even though their diets and activity levels were the same. Reducing stress balances out hormones and allows your body to function better, so you should aim to reduce your stress levels for success in losing weight.

### 8. Not Exercising

Many people rely solely on diet to lose weight, which can be effective to a certain extent, but it is the combination of diet and exercise that *really* gets results. Unless you are unable to exercise due to injury, you should get moving every day, even if it is just walking for half an hour. Exercise is a great stress reliever, boosts your energy, and research into long term weight loss has consistently found that exercise is the key to not only losing weight, but keep it off.

### 9. Eating Too Many Empty Calories

Losing weight isn't all about eating less, it is more about eating *better*. The same is true of your calorie allowance; just because two foods have the same amount of calories does not make them equally good for you. Furthermore, low calorie or low fat options are not always the way to go, so try to avoid light, low fat or specific diet foods as they often substitute healthy fats or calories for added sugar or salt and can be more processed than the regular foods they aim to replace. Instead, aim to get goodness from your diet by seeking out foods packed with vitamins, minerals and healthy fats, avoid anything overly processed, and fill up on fiber and protein to keep hunger at bay for longer. You should also watch the calories and sugar you consume in drinks, as liquid calories can really add up. For example, a 12 ounce can of soda contains approximately 150 calories. If you cut out one can of soda per day you can lose 15 pounds in one year.

### 10. Not Drinking Enough Water

Drinking water has so many benefits for those losing weight. Water suppresses your appetite by filling you up without the calories, it helps your body work better and boosts metabolism, and it helps you drop water weight. Make water the **ONLY** thing you drink and you'll be sure to see a healthier you with improved weight loss results.

### 11. Not Challenging Yourself

Many people will see weight loss results early on and then will let their guard down and not pay attention to their caloric intake and then gain back all of the weight that they lost initially. Always challenge yourself continuously to eat better and be more active by setting new targets and mini-goals to keep your interest up and you will be sure to enjoy more success losing weight.