

What Are You Weighting For?

by Kimberly London, Registered Dietitian

OK, so you've put on a few pounds over the last few weeks/months/years. Adds up, doesn't it? How does this happen? A few too many chocolates during the holidays and a few too many trips to fast food restaurants and surprise! You're 30 pounds overweight!

Weight loss isn't brain surgery – just eat less and exercise more. So why does this seem so hard? (Trust me, if I knew the answer to this I would be a very rich woman.) You need to be motivated and prepared. If you aren't ready, you'll never be successful.

Here are a few tips to help you on your way:

1. Follow Eat Well with Canada's Food Guide (www.hc-sc.gc.ca). I know you've heard it before, but if we all followed Canada's Food Guide we would be a slimmer, healthier nation. Eating a wide variety of healthy foods with fewer treats is the key.

2. Eat lots of fibre – 25-38 grams per day. Fibre keeps you regular, lowers cholesterol levels, and manages blood sugars. The real miracle of fibre is that it enhances weight loss by absorbing water and makes you feel fuller longer. So add more veggies, fruits, and whole grains to your meals and snacks

3. Eat regular meals and snacks. This helps keep your metabolism high throughout the day. As a result you burn more calories (even when you're in front of the TV). Eating regularly can also prevent overindulging; you are less likely to become famished (leading to reduced impulse control) and run for a burger and fries.

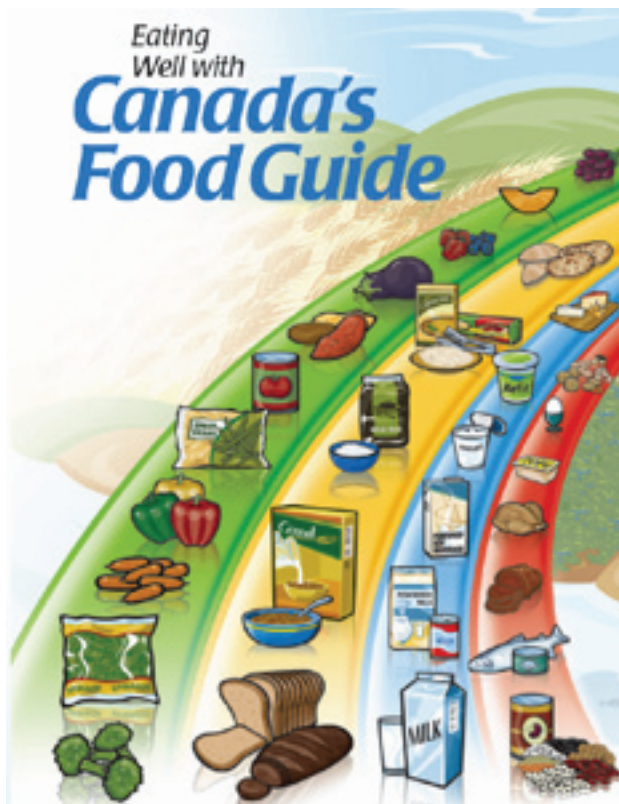
4. See a registered/professional dietitian. Dietitians and nutritionists have a five-year university degree (maybe more) with an accredited internship that focuses on food and health. A dietitian can look at what you eat and maybe see something you're not eating. She/he can also make a plan that fits your lifestyle and takes into account your likes and dislikes. The added bonus is that dietitian services are frequently covered by medical plans.

5. Don't forget to treat yourself every once in a while. The healthiest, slimmest people you know still indulge every once in a while. Just make sure it's worth it. Remember the mantra everything in moderation; just have smaller portions of treats less often.

6. Don't buy unhealthy snacks for your kids or spouse, if unhealthy foods are in the house, you will eat them. Avoid the temptation by banning them from the house or only having them one night a week. The entire family should follow your healthy lifestyle, not just you. So more veggies and air popped popcorn and less chips and pop!

7. Don't weigh yourself too often. Obsessively weighing yourself can mess with your mind. If you take off a pound, you think you can eat more. If you gain a pound, you feel bad about yourself and may turn to food. Some people should only weigh themselves once a month.

8. Plan your meals. Keep a list of easy meal ideas on the fridge and make sure



you have the ingredients on hand. This makes it easier to choose foods from home instead of running through the drive-through when you're in a hurry. Tuna melts, whole-wheat pasta with sauce, and soups are easy, healthy choices.

9. Keep a food journal and monitor your intake. People who write down what they eat find it easier to make healthy food choices. It is much easier to write *broccoli and carrots* than *two hamburgers and a large fries*. Also, if you put on 10 lbs you can figure out why! Buy yourself a little book for your purse (or your back pocket) and take it wherever you go. You'll thank yourself.

10. Work out with a motivating buddy. When you feel like sitting around eating chips, your buddy can get you up and moving. And it's always nice to talk to someone going through the same thing. Remember that you should be working out at least 30 minutes every day. Try something new. In Nova Scotia we have curling, skating, running, tennis, skiing, hiking, walking, squash, yoga, pilates, aerobics, biking, etc. The list is endless. Healthy eating and exercising go hand

in hand. Contact your local municipality and see what your town has to offer.

One last thing: there are many fad diet programs out there. They are not only expensive, but they may also be bad for your health. You do not need supplements, pre-prepared meals, or special body wraps to lose weight. Just use some common sense, eat more fruits and veggies, and get out for a walk on your lunch break. The time is now to commit to a healthy lifestyle!

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