

Dear *Walk Across Texas* Participant,

Included with this letter is the ninth topic of the Weight Management Series called “Maintaining a Healthy Weight.” The goal of this topic is to maintain a healthy weight for a lifetime.

To help you reach this goal, look for key points while reading “Maintaining a Healthy Weight.”

- Maintaining a healthy weight is a lifetime commitment.
- A weight range allows for normal changes in body weight.
- Watch calories and fat intake.
- Participate in physical activity.
- A commitment for a lifetime will ensure weight management success.
- Learn support skills.
- You are your best source of support.

Happy Walking!

Sincerely,

# Weight Management Series — Health Break 9

## Maintaining a Healthy Weight

### Goal:

To maintain a lifetime healthy weight

### Objective:

Participants will:

- Determine their weight range.
- Balance calorie intake with physical activity.
- Commit to lifestyle changes.
- Live a healthy life.

### Key Teaching Points:

- Maintaining a healthy weight is a lifetime commitment.
- A weight range allows for normal changes in body weight.
- Watch calorie and fat intake.
- Participate in physical activity.
- A commitment for a lifetime will ensure weight management success
- Learn support skills.
- You are your best source of support.

### Activities:

- Have participants write down their healthy weight. Have them subtract 5 pounds and add 5 pounds to this weight to get their weight range. Then, using the topics under “Commit to lifestyle changes”, have them write one thing related to each topic that they can do to maintain a healthy weight. Have a group discussion to share ideas.
- Have participants work in groups to come up with ideas for self-support. Let someone from each group share one idea with the other groups. Discuss the different ideas.

### Evaluation

- Yes  No      1. Limited changes in body weight are normal.
- Yes  No      2. Balance the number of calories you eat with physical activity.
- Yes  No      3. Commitment to lifestyle changes ensures success.
- Yes  No      4. Support skills guide you through problems and challenges.
- Yes  No      5. You are your best source of support and encouragement.

Answers: 1. Yes; 2. Yes; 3. Yes; 4. Yes; 5. Yes

## Maintaining a Healthy Weight

Maintaining a healthy weight is a life long effort that requires a commitment. The good news is research has shown that maintaining a healthy weight is easier than losing weight.

So, how do you maintain your healthy weight? You continue to do many of the same things you did to lose weight:

- Determine the healthy weight you desire and then decide on a weight range. For example, your healthy weight is 150 lbs. Your weight range would be 145 to 155. By having a weight range, you allow for normal changes in body weight such as those associated with a monthly cycle.
- Balance the number of calories you eat against the amount of physical activity you are consistently willing to do. Remember to:
  - Limit certain foods such as sweets
  - Control serving sizes of food
  - Count calories
  - Watch fat intake
  - Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables
  - Do not skip meals — eat 5 small meals a day (including snacks)
- Commit to lifestyle changes. For example:
  - *Daily physical activity.* Daily physical activity is one of the most important things you can do to prevent weight gain. Continue walking 30–60 minutes daily.
  - *Problem solving.* Identify problems that threaten your success and determine ways to work out the problems. For example, attending a family wedding that involves several days of sitting around and a lot of food.
  - *Limit eating out.* If you like to eat out often, limit eating out to only 3 times a week. Do not eat at a fast food restaurant more than once a week.
  - *Social support.* Ask family and friends to help you get through the hard times.
  - *Monitor food intake and physical activity.* To control your habits, you must be aware of them. Keep a diary of your daily eating habits and physical activity. Pick a “quiet time” to read the diary. You may want to reward yourself for the successes and decide how to do better tomorrow. Continue to weigh yourself at least once a week.
  - *Stress management.* Identify causes of stress. Use techniques such as meditation or muscle relaxation to reduce stress. Physical activity is very good for improving mood and reducing stress.
  - *Lapse or relapse prevention.* Identify high risk situations such as dining out, parties, or things that prevent physical activity. Develop ways to avoid or minimize the risk. Learn to forgive yourself. Look at a lapse as a learning experience and realize that you will be back on track tomorrow.

After you have maintained your weight for a few months, you will begin to notice fewer positive comments from family and friends. You must remember: You are your own best source of support and encouragement! Learn support skills you need to guide yourself through problems and challenges. Practice these skills every day. Recognize what you have done to improve your health and give yourself the credit you deserve.

**Today is the first day of the rest of your healthy life!**

## Self-Support Suggestions

Take responsibility for your weight by being supporting yourself:

- Ask for what you want — praise, feedback, cooperation, and reward.
- Ask for help when needed.
- Request that affection and sharing not be associated with food.
- Ask people not to offer you food; assure them you will ask for what you want to eat.
- Minimize “food talk” when you are with friends; it is a social cue to eat.
- Entertain without high-calorie/high-fat foods.
- Ask people not to snack around you.
- Develop exercise programs with others.
- Give away clothes that are now “too large” to prevent the temptation to return to your old size.
- Enjoy being slim and appealing by dressing up every chance you get.
- Remind yourself of the work it took to reach your current weight — don’t let it be a wasted effort.
- “Aim to maintain” when problems interfere with weight loss.
- Look at the positives of weight loss:
  - Reduced risk of chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, etc.
  - Increased energy level
  - Better physical condition
  - Lower stress level
- Meet once a week with two or three friends who are going through body changes.
- Look at maintenance as a new and exciting way of life.