



**Eat Well.  
Move More.  
Feel Great!**

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What is a Healthy Body Weight?

There is no one particular body type that can be defined as healthy. A healthy body weight varies from person to person and is based upon your genetic background and family history of body shape and weight. It's a weight that promotes good eating habits, allows you to participate in regular physical activity, and is acceptable to you.

### How do I know if I am at a healthy weight?

Health professionals commonly use the Body Mass Index (BMI) as a way to determine whether a person is maintaining a healthy body weight. BMI is calculated from your height and weight and is an estimate of body fat. It gives you a good indication about whether you are at risk for health problems that are related to being overweight or obese. A healthy BMI is a value in the range of 18.5 - 25. A person's risk for Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and other diseases largely increases when BMI is above 30. In addition, having a very low BMI value, lower than 18.5, is also associated with increased risk of disease and death. You can calculate your BMI, by using the BMI calculator found at <http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/>.

### Will fiber help me maintain a healthy weight?

Fiber fills you up, which helps prevent overeating. High-fiber foods (fruits, vegetables, beans, peas, nuts, seeds, brown rice, and whole wheat bread) fill you up more than low-fiber foods, so you don't get that empty, hungry feeling soon after eating. They act to naturally decrease your appetite. Also, high-fiber foods tend to be lower-calorie foods unless lots of fats and sugars are added. Studies show that eating fiber at a given meal prevents overeating by decreasing food intake at the next meal.

### Does soda make people fat?

Regular non-diet soda and other sugar-sweetened beverages contribute to weight gain and to the growing obesity epidemic. They are the single largest source of sugar in our daily diets. Sodas contain about 140-150 calories (all from sugar) in a 12 oz. can. By adding just one 12 oz. can of sugared soda a day to one's diet, everything else being equal, the average person will gain 15 pounds in a year. Even for people who are not watching their weight, there is no reason to fill up on "empty" calories from soda.

### How does alcohol affect weight?

Whether it is beer or wine, alcohol of every kind is very high in calories. The energy from alcohol cannot be used to fuel daily activities. Alcohol provides 'empty calories', meaning it doesn't provide any nutrients and it increases our appetite. It inhibits the part of our brain that tells us we feel full and triggers an increased desire for food and a tendency to eat more food.

### How do I know if my activity is moderate or vigorous?

Your body is working at a moderate level when you can talk, but not sing. Your body is working at a vigorous level when you can't say more than a few words without passing a breath.



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Nutrition Services • Alameda County Public Health Department

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For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. Funded by USDA SNAP, an equal opportunity provider and employer. Visit [www.cachampionsforchange.net](http://www.cachampionsforchange.net) for healthy tips. • California Department of Public Health



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### **What kinds of activity should I do to get the health benefits of physical activity?**

To get the health benefits of physical activity, do a combination of aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities. Aerobic activities increase your breathing and will help improve the health of your heart, lungs, and circulatory system. These are activities like walking briskly, biking, swimming, dancing at a quick pace, jogging, or playing soccer or other sports. Strength exercises such as lifting weights, using a resistant band, doing push-ups, sit-ups, or arm curls, improve your muscle strength and help maintain your ability to carry out everyday activities.

### **How much physical activity should I be doing?**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines recommend, at a minimum, for all adults to get 2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) each week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity. This is equal to 30 minutes a day on 5 days a week. Children should be active for a minimum of 1 hour (60 minutes) a day. The guidelines also recommend that adults and children do muscle-strengthening activity at least 2 days a week.

### **If I am not currently doing any physical activity, how do I start?**

If you have not been doing regular physical activity, begin with a light routine (such as walking briskly) and gradually increase the minutes and intensity of your activities as your fitness improves. Try dividing your 30 minutes of daily activity into three 10-minute periods and gradually increase the time as you progress.

### **I have always heard eggs are bad for the heart because of their cholesterol level, is this true?**

Recent research has shown that eating eggs – up to one a day – does not increase heart disease risk in healthy individuals. People who have difficulty controlling their total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol may want to be careful about eating egg yolks and instead choose foods made with egg whites. For people who have diabetes and heart disease, it is best not to eat more than three yolks per week.

### **How much protein food should I eat in a day, at a meal, or for a snack?**

Protein foods include both animal (meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs) and plant (beans, peas, soy products, nuts and seeds sources). We should eat 5 – 7 ounces of protein food a day. An ounce of protein foods is 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or seafood; 1 egg; ¼ cup cooked beans or peas; ½ ounce nuts or seeds, or 1 tablespoon of peanut butter. A healthy portion size of protein for a meal is about 3-4 ounces which is about the size of the palm of your hand. A healthy portion size of protein for a snack is about 1 ounce – or a handful of nuts, a cube of cheese or cheese stick, a tablespoon of peanut butter, or one thin slice of lean turkey.



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