FIVE WAYS TO REDUCE WEIGHT AND LOWER BMI

What is BMI?

Your body mass index (BMI) is a measurement of your height and weight, and it can provide more insight into your body fat percentage than just weight alone. Getting your BMI into a normal range, and aiming for a healthy weight, can help you reduce numerous health risks, including heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and even certain cancers. Aiming to lower your weight can feel overwhelming, especially if you have a significant amount to lose. But by changing up your everyday habits, you’re more likely to reach your target weight and BMI faster. Here are some strategies.

Set weekly goals

The most sustainable weight loss happens at a slow, steady pace. Losing too much weight too quickly can cause a yo-yo effect of gaining and losing, which can get frustrating. Aim for about 1 to 2 pounds per week instead.

Be aware of eating habits

People can take in more calories than they planned when they have unhealthy eating habits, like snacking when stressed, eating too fast or skipping meals and then overeating later. Keep a food diary for a couple days to track what you’re eating, when, and especially why. You can begin to identify when you’re eating out of boredom, and what might trigger junk food binges.

Sneak in exercise

Experts advise that you should get at least two and a half hours of moderate-intensity activity a week. That level of exercise can also help you on the path toward a lower weight and BMI. Hitting that goal is easier when you “sneak” activity into everyday life. Try to take the stairs whenever possible; park at the far end of a lot when shopping; do squats as you brush your teeth; stand or walk during phone calls.

Go for the veggies
Schedules get busy, and that can lead to choosing convenience over home cooking. That’s okay. You can still stay on track by focusing on more vegetable-rich options, like having salad instead of French fries, asking for steamed veggies as a side dish instead of rice or pasta and keeping snacks handy like baby carrots or celery sticks.

**Form a team**

If you have the right support system, developing healthier eating and exercise habits can be easier. Find a buddy to join you for healthy cooking classes or challenge a friend to a daily steps competition. Encourage family members to prep more nutritious meals and check out the health resources from the *Take Charge! Live Well!* program.

**Have questions? Contact 866-556-2288.**

**SOURCES:**

- nhlbi.nih.gov
- cdc.gov