

Personalized Weight-Loss Plan

No one diet suits everyone. People come in various shapes and sizes, have unique health issues and eating behaviors, and lose weight at different speeds.

So why rely on standard weight-loss plans to satisfy your personal dietary needs?

Even formulated diets that offer balanced nutrition can feel rigid and boring.

As the weight drops off so does your enjoyment of eating. Design a food plan that meets personal goals within your day-to-day life. Discuss weight loss with your health care provider, especially if you have diabetes, obesity or other chronic conditions.

Identify your eating preferences, behaviors and habits that lead to weight gain such as:

- Eating excess sugar or refined grains, and high-calorie snacks.
- Eating big portions.
- Eating out a lot.
- Eating for emotional reasons.
- Consuming lots of high-calorie coffee or soft drinks, juices and/or alcohol.

Losing weight involves both mental and physical hurdles. Start by adjusting 1 habit at a time, such as replacing deep-fried foods with roasted versions.

If you lose weight gradually and steadily (about 1 to 2 pounds per week) you're less likely to regain it.



BEST bits



■ National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week is January 22 to 27.

This national observance promotes awareness of childhood substance abuse and prevention. Parents can learn how to spot abuse in teens, intervention strategies and prevention techniques starting in early childhood. The emphasis: Creating an open family environment that supports healthy early development. Learn more at drugabuse.gov/family-checkup.



■ January is Thyroid Awareness Month. Thyroid trouble? The thyroid gland produces hormones that aid metabolism and energy use, among other functions. When the thyroid underproduces hormones, **hypothyroidism** occurs, causing weight gain, fatigue, hoarseness, constipation and cold intolerance. For persistent symptoms, see your health care provider. Left untreated it can lead to obesity, joint pain, infertility and heart disease.

Drug safety tip: Try to have all your prescriptions filled at the same pharmacy. It will track all your drugs and alert you or your health care provider if a new drug might cause problems. Your pharmacist is a vital member of your health care team, ready to assist and answer your questions.

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“A problem is a chance for you to do your best.”

— Duke Ellington



SMART MOVES TOOLKIT

including this issue's printable download, Weight-Loss Aid: Exercise, is at personalbest.com/extras/19V1tools.



New year, new attitude. Enjoy the weight loss and stay positive. To succeed long term, fit in exercise and *learn to eat, not diet.*

Lose pounds, gain a lot.

Even a small amount of excess weight loss (5% to 10% of your weight) can lower elevated blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol and triglyceride levels; reduce unhealthy abdominal fat; and reduce joint pain and disability.

Walking: Step It Up a Notch

Walking at an average exercise pace promotes good health. We've known for years that moderately intense exercise improves the blood supply to the heart, which helps protect and strengthen the cardiovascular system and overall health.

When we pick up the pace, the health benefits increase, according to an analysis of more than 50,000 walkers, published this year in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*. Walking fast was linked to cutting the risk of death by heart disease and premature death in general by 25%. And the benefits improve as we age.

Adults need at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week, such as brisk walking, to stay healthy. But the more you walk, and the faster, the more beneficial: added physical and mental energy, better sleep and digestion, plus stress control.

More good news: You can fit in exercise faster on days when you're short on time. Just use the America's Walking technique for faster walking:

- 1 WALK** tall. No slouching; avoid excess sway in your back.
- 2 FOCUS** on faster steps. Don't make long strides your goal.
- 3 BEND** your arms. Allow them to swing and help quicken your pace.
- 4 PUSH** off your toes fully. Visualize people behind you seeing the bottom of your shoe on each step.



Learn more at pbs.org/americaswalking/health/health4tips.html.

EXPERT advice

Q: Online pharmacy tips?

A: Consumers often use online pharmacies for convenience and cost savings. But the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy found only 3% of online pharmacies they looked at complied with U.S. pharmacy laws and standards.

Fraudulent pharmacies abound.

Their websites appear legitimate when they're not, and they may sell fake, expired or otherwise unsafe products. Beware of online pharmacies that let you buy drugs simply by completing an online form, offer prices that seem too good to be true, or send emails offering cheap medicine.

Signs of safe online pharmacies:

They require a prescription from your health care provider. They have a physical address and phone number in the U.S. and are licensed in the U.S. They can provide a licensed pharmacist to answer your questions. To find legitimate pharmacies, search for **Know Your Online Pharmacy** at fda.gov. — Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

Why You Shouldn't Self Diagnose

The internet offers a wide variety of medical information, though, unfortunately, it's not always current or reliable.

Health articles from reputable websites can be a good place to start, but they are not definitive or individualized for you. Regardless of where you get your information, diagnosing your own ailments can lead to several problems:

Self-diagnosis or ignoring certain symptoms can delay the diagnosis of a disease. For example, if you decide stress is causing your fatigue, you may fail to get evaluated for other underlying disorders such as anemia, low thyroid or diabetes. Many conditions are most treatable when they are caught early and receive prompt care.

Some symptoms can indicate more than 1 illness. For example, you may think you suffer from anxiety. But 2 out of 3 people with anxiety have depression as well. Most health care providers have studied for

years to learn how to recognize associated or look-alike conditions.

People who research symptoms online often assume the worst.

Seeing your provider to find out what you have is often reassuring; many times it is not what you fear.

Some people convince themselves they have a particular disease and request every available exam. But unnecessary tests raise medical costs and your health insurance may not cover them.

Call your provider as soon as possible if your symptoms are persistent, recurrent or severe. If you're ever in doubt, call your provider for advice.



5 Ways to Foil Sleep Thieves

Many obvious things can disrupt sleep occasionally, from a barking dog to a noisy party across the street. But some sleep thieves are stealthier.

Avoid these sneaky sleep robbers:

1 Don't eat within 3 to 4 hours of bedtime. Research shows the sooner you go to bed after eating, the more likely you'll have heartburn and, if you have **gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)**, symptoms may be severe enough to keep you tossing and turning.

2 Skip late-night workouts. Regular exercise earlier in the day will help you sleep. But physical activity 3 hours or fewer before bedtime can rev you up and keep you from falling asleep.

3 Hit the off switch. All lights, including LED bulbs and electronic devices (yes, that includes your phone) can confuse the brain, disrupting normal body rhythms, which can make getting to sleep even harder.

4 Tell your health care provider if you snore. If you snore, you may have **sleep apnea** (short pauses in breathing that interfere with the deep, restful sleep cycle). Other signs of sleep apnea include gasping or choking during sleep, excessive restlessness at night or sleepiness during the day.

5 Skip drinking near bedtime. Caffeinated drinks late in the day can keep you awake. And an alcoholic drink at bedtime is more likely to disrupt your slumber.



Nutrition Essentials: **eating smart**

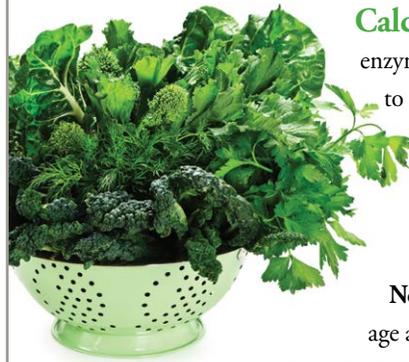
Do You Need More of These?

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Did you know that the body requires more than 30 essential nutrients for good health? If you are eating a wide variety of mostly whole, unprocessed foods, you are probably getting all of the nutrients you need. But even with a great diet, studies show Americans don't get enough of several nutrients.

Vitamin D: This hormone is essential for bone health, immunity, nerves and muscles, and may help protect against cancer. But it's found in very few foods. Sources include fatty fish (such as salmon and trout), eggs and fortified milk. Vitamin D is naturally formed in the body when the skin is exposed to the sun. Supplements are recommended for most adults, especially those in cool climates where there's less daily sunlight. Aim for 600 IU to 800 IU per day.

Magnesium: This mineral helps regulate muscle and nerve function, and helps make protein and bone. People likely to have magnesium deficiency include older adults or those with celiac disease, Crohn's disease or type 2 diabetes. Good magnesium sources include beans, nuts, seeds, whole grains, leafy greens, milk and yogurt. Adults need 300 mg to 420 mg daily.



Calcium: It's vital for bone health and for releasing the hormones and enzymes needed for many body functions. Children aged 9 to 18 tend to not get enough, especially when they replace milk with soft drinks. Many women older than 50 also may not get enough. Calcium sources include milk, cheese, yogurt, leafy greens, canned salmon, sardines and fortified beverages (e.g., almond milk).

Adults need 1,000 mg to 1,200 mg per day.

Note: Supplement amounts depend on age and gender.



TIP of the MONTH Get More of the Good Stuff

To bump up your vitamin and mineral intake, choose foods over supplements. When vitamins come from food, they are paired with other nutrients in the way that Mother Nature intended. Supplements can never fully mimic the exact combination of fiber, antioxidants, fat, vitamins and minerals that are packaged within a certain food. Supplements are Plan B.

Sesame-Crusted Salmon on Kale

¼ cup sesame seeds	1 tsp minced garlic
Pinch salt	1 tsp minced ginger
4 salmon fillets (4 oz. each)	8 cups kale
4 tsp olive oil, <i>divided</i>	1 tbsp reduced sodium soy sauce

Preheat oven to 400°F. **Combine** sesame seeds and salt on a plate.

Press each salmon fillet in seeds to evenly coat 1 side. **Heat** 2 tsp oil in large, oven-proof skillet over medium heat. **Cook** the salmon, seed side down, for 5 minutes. **Transfer** to oven and cook for 10 minutes per inch of fish or until fish easily flakes with fork. **Meanwhile,** add remaining 2 tsp oil to another pan set over medium. **Add** garlic and ginger; sauté 1 minute. **Add** kale and sauté 5-8 minutes until wilted. **Stir** in soy sauce. **Serve** salmon atop kale.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving:

337 calories | 35g protein | 14g total fat | 2g saturated fat | 7g mono fat
5g poly fat | 17g carbohydrate | 2g sugar | 6g fiber | 340mg sodium

EASY recipe

Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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Healthy Stress Busters

Everyone experiences stress from time to time. But if it's chronic or severe, the result can be headaches, disrupted sleep, digestive upset, anxiety, depression and more.

Use these strategies to soothe mind and body:

Move more, every day. Walking briskly even 30 minutes a day can boost your mood and energy, as well as benefit your health, including helping control weight, lowering the risk for heart disease and stroke, and promoting restful sleep.

Practice relaxation. Make time for tai chi, meditation, yoga and other techniques that reduce mental and physical wear and tear.

Review your daily must-do list. Of course, there are things you must do and deadlines you can't miss. But consider what can wait or be accomplished in a less stressful way. Learn to say **no** to extra activities when necessary.

Take a bite out of stress. Many people pick unhealthy foods when they're stressed, according to Ohio State University researchers. The resulting health problems may increase stress. Instead, opt for **mindful eating**. Concentrate on healthy foods, only eat when you're hungry, focus on enjoying each bite and stop when you're full.

Get help with existing or new health problems. Stress can trigger or worsen conditions such as insomnia, excessive alcohol and other substance abuse, depression and trouble controlling blood pressure or blood sugar. Call your health care provider if you need help.

Beat Monday morning blues



These suggestions may help you say goodbye to feeling down whenever your workweek starts:

- 1 Change your attitude about Mondays.** Make a list, and consider possible solutions. Start with the changes that you have the most control over.
 - 2 Stay organized.** Before the weekend, tidy your work space and plan next week's tasks. Keep Mondays low-key if you can.
 - 3 Cultivate friendships.** Work is more pleasurable when you connect with your coworkers.
 - 4 Visualize success.** Imagine going through a workday and handling challenges effectively.
- Eric Endlich, PhD

SAFETY corner

Removing a Broken Light Bulb

You need to replace a shattered light bulb. All that's left of it are shards of glass and the inside filaments — now what? Follow these steps to stay safe:

- 1] GET** heavy-duty gloves, needle-nose pliers and eye protection.
 - 2] PUT** on eye protection and heavy gloves.
 - 3] TO** avoid electrical shock, turn off the power to the light at the breaker.
 - 4] IF** the filament is undamaged, use needle-nose pliers to hold the filament base and gently twist counter-clockwise. If the filament is broken, use the pliers to grip the bulb base and twist it.
- TIP:** You can also use a raw potato to remove a broken bulb. Cut the potato in half, press the half against the socket and twist counter-clockwise.