

Courtesy of Genesys Health System

Obesity is a medical problem which has received a great deal of attention in the U.S. Obesity is defined as an excessive amount of fat on the body. Many programs have been developed which promise to reduce weight. However, one must be concerned with the safety of the diet along with the weight loss. The following are some factors which should be considered before beginning a weight loss diet.

WEIGHT LOSS GUIDELINES:

1. A weight loss of 1-2 pounds per week is ideal. Any more may not be healthy.
2. The program should contain the Food Guide Pyramid Food Groups: Milk, Meat or Meat Substitute, Breads and Cereals, Fruits and Vegetables.
3. The diet should provide a variety of food during the day and throughout the week.
4. The program should provide at least 1200 calories in order to meet the recommended dietary allowances.
5. Avoid special “formulas” or drugs for weight loss. Many aren’t nutritionally sound. They also don’t modify behavior in order to maintain ideal body weight once it is achieved.

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION:

1. Eat slowly! It takes approximately 20 minutes for the brain to know you are eating.
2. Eat three well balanced meals per day.
3. Begin an exercise program. Start slowly! If you have heart problems, other medical problems or are over 35 years old, get advice from your physician first.
4. Avoid second helpings of food.
5. Avoid foods high in fat and sugar. They provide many calories but few nutrients.
6. Have a list of alternate activities and do them when you feel like going on a binge.
7. Plan meals ahead of time and stay with the plan.
8. Drink skim or low fat milk. One cup of skim milk has 80 calories and one cup of whole milk has 170 calories.
9. Use smaller dishes. This makes it appear like you’re receiving more food.
10. Have raw vegetables washed and ready for snacks. They are very low in calories and high in nutrients.