

Following a healthy lifestyle: hints and tips



Research shows that a waistline of more than 94cm for men and 80cm for women increases the risk of some types of cancer, including cancers of the bowel, breast and oesophagus, while a waistline of more than 102cm for men and 88cm for women *greatly* increases your risk.

Cancer Council encourages people to measure their waist, and look at making changes to reduce their cancer risk if they exceed these measurements.

How do I measure my waist?

- Measure your waist at the halfway point between your lowest rib and the top of your hipbone. This point is around your stomach, roughly in-line with your belly button.
- Lay the measuring tape directly on your skin.
- Take the measure at the end of expiration (breathing out normally).
- The tape should be snug, but shouldn't compress the flesh.

Why do we gain weight?

Weight gain occurs when the energy you eat and drink exceeds the energy your body uses. If you are overweight, you may be eating more than you need, OR not doing enough physical activity.

HEALTHY EATING

To help reduce your cancer risk, a healthy, well balanced diet is recommended. Cut down on fatty foods and eat more fruit and vegetables and a variety of grain foods, mostly wholegrain or high fibre varieties. It's best to choose non-fat or reduced fat milk and dairy products.

How much do I need to eat?

It is recommended that adults eat five serves of vegetables and two serves of fruit a day for good health and to reduce cancer risk. Most adults should also eat three to six serves of grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high fibre varieties. Include lean meat, fish and poultry, but limit processed meats like ham, bacon, sausages, salami and frankfurts.

Fruit and vegetables

- Snack on fruit and vegetables. Dried fruits and nuts can be high in kilojoules, so should be eaten in moderation.
- Add fresh or canned fruit to your breakfast cereal.
- Include at least three different coloured vegetables with your main meal.
- Include salad with your lunch.
- Cook vegetables in different ways for interest and variety, e.g. oven roasted, grilled or barbecued.
- Use frozen, dried or canned vegetables if fresh are not available.
- Adapt your recipes to include more vegetables, e.g. add carrot, celery and peas to bolognese sauce.

Drinks

- Avoid sweet drinks, including soft drinks – choose water instead.
- Alcohol consumption should be avoided or limited. For people who do drink alcohol, the recommended amount is an average of no more than two standard drinks a day.

Portion sizes

Reduce portion sizes – many people eat much more than they need. Try to gradually make your usual portion size smaller.

Other helpful hints

- Stop before you eat and think about why you are eating – are you really hungry?
- Check food labels for kilojoules and fat, they show the amounts per serve size and per 100g – choose carefully.
- To avoid buying food items you don't really need, don't do your supermarket shop when you're hungry.
- Don't skip breakfast. Eating soon after you wake up helps burn kilojoules at a higher rate until lunch.
- Drink water before eating and during your meal, as it will help to fill you up.
- Leave out the obvious extras like parmesan cheese, margarine and added sugar on cereal or in tea/coffee.
- Try using mustard on sandwiches instead of mayonnaise. Mustard has no fat and hardly any kilojoules. Otherwise try thinly spread avocado.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Being physically active is one of the most important things you can do to help reduce your weight.

How much exercise do I need?

For good general health, do at least 30 minutes of moderate activity daily. Up to one hour of moderate activity or 30 minutes of vigorous activity is recommended each day to cut your risk of cancer.

Moderately intense activity causes a slight but noticeable increase in breathing and heart rate and includes brisk walking, mowing the lawn, medium-paced swimming or cycling.

Vigorous activity makes you 'huff and puff' and includes active sports like football, squash, netball and basketball and activities such as aerobics, circuit training, jogging, and fast cycling.

Tips on how to include more exercise in your daily life

- See exercise as an opportunity, not an inconvenience.
- Walk instead of driving to the shops, and walk during your lunchbreaks.
- Walk or cycle to work and walk up stairs instead of taking the lift or escalator.
- Do something you enjoy with a friend, like tennis, swimming or dancing.
- Get off the train or bus one stop earlier and walk the rest of the way.
- Do vigorous housework like vacuuming or mowing the lawn.
- Step it up – a pedometer is a gadget that fits on to your belt and counts the number of steps you take. Aim towards a goal of 10,000 steps each day.
- Add some variety with active recreation such as bushwalking, surfing or cycling.
- Try something different like salsa or ballroom dancing.
- Pilates and yoga are great for building strength and improving balance.

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