

# A Non-Diet Approach to Health

Nourishing your body to be happy and healthy.



## WHAT IS HEALTH?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease".



## WHAT DOES WEIGHT HAVE TO DO WITH IT?

Although weight can play a role in health, alone it does not determine if you are healthy or unhealthy. Studies have shown that focusing solely on weight loss as a means of improving health can actually cause emotional, psychological, and physical harm.

## UNDERLYING HEALTH CONDITIONS

If you have an underlying health condition like diabetes, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol, focus on improving factors such as blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels instead of focusing on the scale.

**YOU CAN BE HEALTHY,  
NO MATTER YOUR WEIGHT.**

## WHAT AFFECTS YOUR WEIGHT?

**Genetics:** DNA can play a large role in determining bone structure, body shape, size, and weight.

**Ethnicity:** Certain ethnic groups may have larger or smaller bodies than others.

**Sex:** Men and women tend to carry body weight differently.

**Stress:** Stress can have a variety of negative effects on the body, including unintentional weight loss or weight gain.

**Environment:** The environments where you live, work, and play have an affect on your daily habits. All these factors can influence weight.

**Medical conditions and medications:** Conditions like hypothyroidism, polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), depression, and others can cause weight gain. Certain medications may also lead to weight gain.

**Habits:** Your food and exercise habits can influence weight. When you make positive changes to your food choices, activities, or routines, your weight may or may not change. Both are okay.

# ACTIONS WE CAN TAKE FOR A HEALTHIER, HAPPIER LIFE



## NUTRITION

- Eat regularly throughout the day to help regulate blood sugars.
- Practice mindful eating and pay attention to the cues that your body is hungry or full.
- Balance your meals by including vegetables and fruits, whole grains and lean proteins as seen on Canada's Food Guide.
- A balanced diet includes foods you enjoy and foods that are good for your health.
- No foods should be completely off limits, and remember, **healthy eating isn't perfect eating.**

## MOVEMENT



- Physical activity is important for health, and includes more than just running or going to the gym. Choose forms of active movement that you enjoy and make you feel good.
- Going for walks, gardening, hunting, and housework are all examples of movement that can be beneficial for health.

## SLEEP

- It is recommended you get 7-9 hours of rest per night.
- Sufficient sleep ensures you are well-rested and equipped to make healthy choices.
- Sleep also positively affects your mood, hormones, immune system, appetite, breathing, blood pressure, and cardiovascular health.



## STRESS MANAGEMENT



- When you are stressed, your body works in overdrive to keep you going.
- It is important to find your own ways to cope with stress. This may include meditation, exercise, working on a hobby you enjoy, talking to someone you trust, or taking time for yourself each day.

## SOCIAL CONNECTION

- Having strong social connections plays a major role in your mental, emotional, and physical health.
- Social connection includes visiting with friends and family, volunteering, helping others, and asking for help when you need it.



*It is possible to improve your physical and mental health without focusing on weight loss.*

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