

Get Healthy with Your Benefits: Weight Management

VEBA Online



A growing challenge

We've all heard it — 60% of Americans are overweight, and the percentage continues to increase. Two reasons for this trend are the growing number of sedentary jobs and the popularity of prepackaged and fast-food meals. Today, more people than ever work while sitting at a desk, many in front of a computer, and because we're all so busy, we tend to purchase convenience foods for a quick meal.

Although many people go on diets to lose weight, they are unsuccessful at keeping the extra weight off for the long term. Even in medically supervised weight-loss programs, people often regain their weight after several months because they don't exercise regularly. To lose weight, you must increase activity and decrease calories.

The importance of exercise

Exercise is essential in controlling weight. The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute makes the following recommendations about exercise to prevent weight gain:

- Consult your doctor and start slowly to avoid injuries
- If you have been inactive, start with 10-30 minutes of moderately intense activity, such as walking, three days a week. Build yourself up to 30-45 minutes per day, every day (or most days)
- Reduce sedentary activities such as watching television
- Build more activity into your day — park farther from your destination, take the stairs rather than the elevator, walk your dog, etc.
- Schedule your physical activity a week in advance, budget the time to do it, and use a diary to record the amount of time you spend exercising, the type of exercise, and the intensity of the exercise.

online resources

Here are some places you can go to for help or for more information on weight management:

- The National Institute of Health (NIH) Web site www.nih.gov.
- To use the NIH interactive menu planner, go to <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/weightlossanddieting.html>.
- **Kaiser Permanente members**
Go to www.kp.org/weight for details on a personalized weight loss plan with HealthMedia Balance®.
- **PacifiCare members**
PacifiCare has teamed up with experts in weight management and health improvement to help you achieve a healthy weight loss, overall fitness and reduced stress level. Go to www.pacificare.com for information on programs and special discounts for PacifiCare members.

Lose weight safely

The National Institute of Health (NIH) Web site provides plentiful information on weight loss, such as the latest news, how to lose weight safely, and an interactive menu planner designed to guide your daily food choices based on one day's calorie allowance. To use the interactive menu planner, go to <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/weightlossanddieting.html>. You can use the interactive menu planner in advance to plan a meal, or at the end of a day to add up your total calorie intake, as well as the fat and carbohydrates you consumed throughout the day.

The NIH Web site (www.nih.gov) also has a Losing Weight Safely brochure with tips for losing weight, such as:

- Eat 300 to 500 fewer calories a day to lose one to two pounds per week
- Exercise 30 minutes (e.g., brisk walking) most days of the week
- Eat less fat and sugar to help you cut calories
- Eat a wide variety of foods
- Before signing up for a weight loss program, ask questions.

Get help from your medical plan

Both Kaiser Permanente and PacifiCare offer weight loss and fitness programs.

Kaiser Permanente members

Go to www.kp.org/weight for details on a personalized weight loss plan with HealthMedia Balance® — receive personally tailored strategies to help you reach your weight loss goals, such as suggestions for healthier eating, ways to improve your self-esteem, and how to make physical activity a part of your daily routine.

On the Kaiser Permanente Web site, you can share your weight-loss successes and frustrations, learn weight-loss tips, and seek support from experts and others in Kaiser Permanente health classes and on the message boards. You can also calculate your BMI (body mass index) to find out if you're at a healthy weight.

In addition to HealthMedia Balance®, Kaiser Permanente — through their medical centers and clinics — offers a variety of classes and programs that can help you get better control over your weight, such as:

- Eating right for life
- Great shape
- Healthy body, healthy weight
- Healthy eating
- Nutrition basics
- Weight and lifestyle
- Weight management
- Weight watchers.

Check out their health classes directory to see which classes are available in your area.

PacifiCare members

PacifiCare has teamed up with experts in weight management and health improvement to help you achieve a healthy weight loss, overall fitness and reduced stress level.

Go to www.pacificare.com for information on the following programs and special discounts for PacifiCare members:

- Weight Watchers
- DietMate — diet and exercise program
- Fitness club savings
- One-on-one support: PacifiCare PerksSM offers savings to members for personal guidance from health educators trained in nutrition, exercise and other health topics. Click on “PacifiCare Perks Overview” under the “Product Information” menu
- VirtualHealthClubSM — set up your personally customized fitness and nutrition plans.