



Achieving a Healthy Body Weight

Want to feel great and have the energy to do the things you love? Your #1 prescription is to attain a healthy weight. Doctors' recommendations to treat obesity are based not only on the evidence that shows being overweight is associated with decreased quality of life, but also on randomized controlled trials showing that weight loss reduces risk factors for disease and early death.



Being overweight increases your risk of developing:

- ▶ High blood pressure
- ▶ High cholesterol
- ▶ Diabetes (Type 2)
- ▶ Heart attack and stroke
- ▶ Gallbladder disease
- ▶ Osteoarthritis and back pain
- ▶ Sleep apnea
- ▶ Certain cancers

Most people who struggle with their weight have tried many different diets with little or no success. And as difficult as it can be to lose weight, we now know that losing weight doesn't necessarily always lead to better health. It's the TYPE of weight you lose, primarily body fat, that is important. A healthy weight-loss plan maintains or increases muscle while promoting fat loss.

Assessing how much body fat you have, and where you're carrying that extra fat, is important for weight management and also for identifying your health risks. Accumulation of fat around your waist is particularly worrisome because it stores itself around



your internal organs and secretes chemicals that increase inflammation in your body. You are at risk if your waist circumference is over 94 cm (37 inches) for men and over 80 cm (31.5 inches) for women.

Excess body fat can greatly increase your health risks. Conversely, a higher ratio of muscle preserves health and reduces illness. Perhaps the most powerful tool in restoring vitality and decreasing risk of illness as we age is to improve our muscle-to-fat ratio. Canadian women should aim to have 17-28% body fat, and men should have 12-21% body fat.

In order to measure your progress, you first need to know your current health status. Although the bathroom scale can give you a rough idea of how healthy your weight is, there are other health factors that need to be considered. A variety of health assessments can be performed with your healthcare provider, most importantly a measurement of your body composition (the ratio of your body fat to muscle mass) using bioelectrical impedance. Measuring your percentage of body fat every couple months ensures you are on the right track with your healthy weight-loss plan.

So how do you lose fat and preserve your muscle?

Certainly *not* using the latest fad diet pill! Research shows that weight loss pills, even natural or herbal pills, do not offer significant help in losing weight. In addition, weight loss pills can actually be harmful to your health. The only method of healthy weight loss that has been thoroughly studied and supported with clinical trials is a healthy diet along with a simple plan of physical activity and stress management.



Although many people want a magic pill that can melt body fat away, the truth is that nothing can replace a healthy lifestyle. That's why I have introduced many patients to the "First Line Therapy" program. First Line Therapy is a therapeutic lifestyle program, which means making choices every day that enhance your health and help prevent disease, enabling you to achieve a full, healthy life.



First Line Therapy is based on extensive scientific research demonstrating that many chronic illnesses can be prevented and treated by adopting a healthy lifestyle. This program has helped many people to reduce extra body fat, decrease risk for heart disease, decrease blood sugar, decrease blood pressure, decrease cholesterol, decrease severity of sleep apnea, reduce symptoms of arthritis and decrease risk for certain cancers.



One of the reasons diets and exercise programs fail is they are one-dimensional—that is, they focus only on weight loss. First Line Therapy isn't just about weight loss, it's about achieving a lifetime of good health. So instead of counting calories, you'll learn:

- Simple steps to help you take control of your specific health situation
- Easy ways to track your progress, tips for success, reminders, and other support that will help you achieve your goals and maintain your health improvement.

First Line Therapy will help you:

- Address the underlying cause of common health problems
- Take control of your health by providing you with the necessary tools
- Live your life in a way that improves your health
- Feel good now, and maintain good health for years to come

Getting Started with a Healthy Lifestyle

One of the most important tips to boost your daily energy levels and lose that excess fat is to avoid skipping meals. Skipping meals leads to increased production of hormones that cause muscle loss and fat gain. Also when skipping meals, people tend to over-eat at their next meal. A healthy diet means eating frequently. Aim for 3 small meals and 2-3 nutritious snacks in between your meals. This style of eating, often



referred to as "grazing," helps maintain stable blood sugar and insulin levels. The end result is improved energy and healthy weight loss.

To ensure your kitchen is stocked with healthy options, be conscious of how you grocery shop. Supermarkets are designed with all the healthy foods primarily found around the perimeter of the store, while packaged and processed foods are likely to be in the center aisles. Candy, soft drinks, and high-fat sugary snacks are usually near the check-out stand for impulse and hunger-driven purchases. So remember not to shop while you're hungry and stick to the perimeter of the store – entering the center aisles solely for items on your shopping list.

Guide to Healthy Supermarket Shopping

Safe → Fresh foods around the perimeter of the store; select goods in the aisles

Caution → Deli; packaged & processed foods in center aisles

Danger → Bakery; candy bars, pop & snack foods at check stand

Many Canadians just like you have adopted a healthier lifestyle and are experiencing the wonderful benefits of good health. If you, or someone you know, are looking for guidance on how to eat well, keep active and

effectively manage the stress in your life, consider starting First Line Therapy. When you understand the fundamentals of healthy living, the challenge is minimal and the rewards are well worth the effort!

