

# Health Watch

Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

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## Reaching Goals One Step at a Time

**H**ave you set any new goals lately? Whether it's to lose a few pounds or exercise more, it's helpful to approach your goals one step at a time.

For example, let's talk about your exercise program. If you haven't exercised in a long time it might seem overwhelming to start a rigorous program. That's why the Advanced Health Systems patient educational materials recommend the stepped approach to goal setting:

➤ Start by increasing your incidental exercise (such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator).

➤ Then, add a five minute walk every other day, gradually increasing the time and frequency.

➤ To further enhance your exercise program include the various aerobic, strength and flexibility exercises described in the "Body Basics" component of the patient education materials.

Remember to continually re-evaluate your exercise program and revise your goals each week to reach the next level of exercise intensity. By using this incremental approach you'll experience lots of small successes along the way.

So the next time you start to set a lofty goal remember to approach it one step at a time! ♦



## Weight Loss More Than Just Looking Good!

**L**ike millions of other people, you might want to shed some extra pounds to simply "look better." Of course, there's nothing wrong with wanting to look better. But do you realize that losing weight can also improve your health in some major ways?

*Even a small weight loss of just 8 to 10 pounds can benefit your health, including reducing your risk of high blood pressure, heart disease and other serious health problems.*

### Reduce High Blood Pressure

According to recent statistics, hypertension (commonly referred to as high blood pressure) tops the list as the most common chronic disease in the United States, afflicting 50 million Americans. High blood pressure also plays the lead-

ing role in developing heart disease, stroke and kidney failure.

Excess body weight goes hand in hand with increased blood pressure. In fact, weight provides the strongest predictor of human blood pressure, so if you *are* overweight, you're increasing your chance of developing high blood pressure and putting your health at serious risk.

The good news is that weight loss (even a modest amount) often helps *reduce* high blood pressure. And if you already suffer from high blood pressure to the point where you're taking hypertension medication, you might even be able to decrease your dosage simply by losing weight. Studies estimate that up to 50% of the adults in the United States who take medicine to control high blood pressure could diminish their need for drug therapy with weight loss.

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## Nutrition Tip

### Just How Much Fat Is That?

**R**educing fat in your diet is the single most important step you can take to help reduce your risk of chronic disease. Both heart disease and cancer are directly linked to diets high in fat while many other health problems are intensified by high fat diets.

While you can't and shouldn't eliminate fat entirely from your diet you can minimize your intake by choosing the right foods. Reading and understanding food labels and nutrition facts panels can help you make healthy choices!

Products often call out to you with labels boasting "low-fat" or "fat-free." As you review the table below to under-

stand what these terms mean, take special note of the words *per serving*. For example, a low fat cream cheese may have only three grams per one ounce serving; however, if you use three ounces you're up to nine grams of fat!

Also, beware of foods claiming they're "reduced-fat." While these products may have less fat than the original versions, they can still contribute a significant amount of fat to your diet — even with standard serving sizes.

So the next time you walk down the grocery store aisles, make your move towards low-fat and fat-free products for better health! ♦

#### Product Labeling Terms for Fat

<b>Fat Free</b>	contains less than ½ gram of fat per serving
<b>Low Fat</b>	contains 3 grams of fat or less per serving
<b>Reduced Fat</b>	contains at least 25% less fat than the standard (higher fat) product

*Weight Loss (Continued from page 1)*

### Prevent Heart Disease

Since high blood pressure leads to heart disease, you've probably made the connection that excess weight also contributes to coronary heart disease. In fact, cardiovascular disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States.

Why does heart disease top the list? First consider that one third of all Americans age 20 or older are medically overweight (defined as being 20% or more above your desirable body weight). And second, that being overweight is a strong risk factor

for coronary heart disease in both men and women.

So what can you do to reduce your risk for developing this number-one killer? To prevent heart disease, strive to achieve and maintain long-term weight loss. (Medical overweight and physical inactivity currently rank right up there with tobacco and heavy alcohol consumption as the major *preventable causes* of death.) You should feel empowered knowing that you can take matters into your own hands to prevent serious health problems.

The moral? Lose weight to look good and to be more healthy. ♦



## Healthy Habits

**I**f you're like some people, you link emotions to hunger. In other words, you eat before you think. When you experience an emotion (such as anxiety), you simultaneously experience a "false" hunger. You then confuse emotional hunger (your need to have the emotion recognized and to receive comfort) with actual or real hunger.

If you succumb to food cravings which result from emotional hunger versus real hunger, try this exercise. On a sheet of paper, record the following:

- the date and time your food craving occurred
- the type of food you craved
- the last food you ate before your craving
- your mood at the time of the craving
- if the hunger was real or emotional
- if you ate the food you craved.

Next, list alternative things you can do to respond to the emotional hunger, such as go for a walk or call a friend.

Then, the next time you experience the emotional hunger, try one of these alternative strategies. And remember, when you successfully employ an alternative strategy, don't forget to reward yourself in some non-food manner! ♦



## Q&A Corner

**Q** I want to lose 35 pounds, but I just can't seem to make much progress. (I've only lost 7 pounds so far.) How can I stay motivated?

**A** Congratulations! You should be proud of what you've already accomplished. Reward yourself (in a non-food way) for this achievement. Buy yourself a new book or go to see a movie. You deserve it! Losing 7 pounds is a *great* first step.



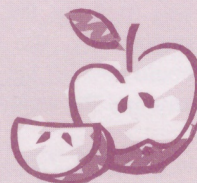
Sometimes, when you don't "see" a big change, you might not be aware of progress you've really made. By losing just a few pounds, you've already started reducing your risk of high blood pressure, heart disease and other serious health problems. Did you know, for example, that the greatest proportionate blood pressure change occurs during the earliest phases of weight loss? You might not "see" the results, but your body can sure tell the difference.

***"Concentrate on the positive changes that result from your weight loss efforts..."***

Remember, don't only focus on "numbers," such as losing 20 pounds or fitting into a size 8. Instead, concentrate on the positive changes that result from your efforts, such as reducing your risk of serious health problems, increasing your activity level, enhancing your lifestyle and boosting your self-esteem.

## Portion Control Quiz

**P**ortion control is an important part of your weight management program. With Advanced Health Systems nutritional food products, meal planning is made easier for you with single serving portions. When choosing other foods in your meal plan you need to be aware of appropriate serving sizes. Take this quiz to see if you know what a serving size looks like.



**1. One ounce of cheese or meat is equal to:**

- a. the size and thickness of a deck of playing cards
- b. the size of your thumb
- c. the size of a baseball

**2. One-half cup of pasta is equal to:**

- a. the size of a Frisbee
- b. the size of a coffee mug
- c. the size of an ice cream scoop with a spring handle

**3. A medium sized apple or orange is equal to:**

- a. the size of a tennis ball
- b. the size of a softball
- c. the size of a grapefruit

**4. One teaspoon of margarine is equal to:**

- a. the size of a dime
- b. the size of the tip of your thumb
- c. the size of a golf ball

If you answered all four questions correctly, you may be ready to pack away your measuring cups and food scales. If you had trouble answering these - dust off the food scale and practice! Try guessing the amount first, and then measuring the food item to see how accurate you are. It won't be long before you're an expert. ♦

Answers: 1) b; 2) c; 3) a; 4) b

**Q** I'm doing fine with the Advanced Health Systems meal plans, but I occasionally get food cravings. How can I handle these cravings and still lose weight?

**A** You *can* give into your food cravings in a healthy way — turn to Advanced Health Systems supplements.

If you crave something sweet, try our thick, creamy puddings. Or, if you experience a "non-sweet" craving, try a hot alternative, such as our delicious soups.

Advanced Health Systems offers an extensive line of tasty, nutritional products to provide you with flavor and texture variety. Best of all, the supplements provide a nutritionally balanced, portion-controlled way to eat satisfying between-meal snacks. Think of your supplements as a healthy way to indulge in your cravings and still lose weight! ♦





## "Here's a Hug!" Success Story

**M**arianne\*, a 32-year-old mom from New York, knew she had to lose weight when she barely had the strength to pick up her toddler to give him a hug. Even the simplest of tasks seemed daunting to Marianne, who had gained 85 pounds during and after her pregnancy.

A turning point came when Marianne's friend told her how she had lost weight on the Advanced Health Systems program. She offered to take Marianne to an orientation session to learn about the basics of the program, including convenient visits, helpful educational materials, easy-to-follow meal plans, a lite exercise program and positive lifestyle changes.

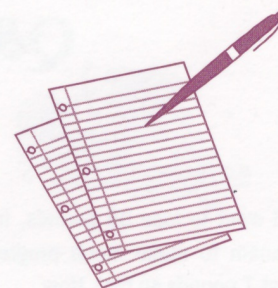
Marianne began the program with renewed hope and excitement. The AHS meal plans enabled her to quickly plan and prepare nutritious meals, which fit perfectly into her busy schedule. And the convenient AHS food products took

the "guess work" out of portion control — she simply prepared and ate them while she fed her son.

The educational materials she received also made a big difference. They empowered her to make healthy food choices for herself and her family. They inspired her to begin an exercise program which included daily walks while she pushed her son in his stroller. And they opened the door for positive changes in both her attitude and her behavior.

Over the course of several months, Marianne was well on her way to reaching her goal. She learned that long-term weight management meant making positive changes in her lifestyle — and she was in it for the long run. But, more importantly, she was thrilled that she could now lift her son to give him a hug anytime she wanted. ♦

\*Name has been changed to protect privacy.



## Proactive Checklist

**W**hen you come in for your routine weigh-ins or maintenance visits, talk with your weight management counselor about any problems, concerns or changes (both positive and negative) you've experienced since your last visit. And don't be afraid to ask questions! Remember, your weight management counselor is your coach, so let him or her know what's on your mind. Here are some suggestions on what to discuss during your visit:

- ☒ how you feel about yourself and about the program
- ☒ questions you have about the program, meal plans or nutritional food products
- ☒ questions about the patient education materials you read prior to each visit
- ☒ help you may need in setting or evaluating your weight loss goals
- ☒ side effects from any medications you take
- ☒ your success stories (i.e. you can now walk up the stairs without being out of breath, etc.) ♦

## Exercise Ideas



➤ If you exercise at the same time every day, you're more likely to make a habit of it and stick with it. To pick a regular exercise time that works for you, choose a time when your energy level peaks. If you feel most energized in the morning, schedule a "before-work" work-out, even if it's just a quick walk around the neighborhood. Choosing a regular exercise time will help you establish a lifelong habit.

➤ Despite encouraging evidence that walking can decrease the risk of heart

attacks and strokes, only about 20 percent of American women walk about three hours a week.

➤ Research shows that walking— even at a leisurely pace of less than three miles per hour — can reduce the risk of a heart attack or stroke by 32 percent. Increasing the pace to three miles an hour or faster reduces the risk by 54 percent.

So take a step toward better health and go for a walk! ♦

Advanced Health Systems® is a comprehensive weight management program which focuses on nutrition education, exercise and positive lifestyle changes. Patients should talk to their physician or health care provider before beginning any diet or exercise program. For more information call 800-222-9201.

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