How to reduce those risky pounds.

There are many reasons people gain weight. Eating too much and not exercising enough are two reasons. The way our bodies use the calories in food gets slower as we get older. This may also cause us to gain too much weight, which can cause health problems.

What is obesity?

People who are severely overweight may be considered obese or have obesity. The number of people gaining too much weight keeps increasing every year. The number of obese adults today is twice as high as 20 years ago. The number of obese children is three times as high. Obesity can cause serious health problems. These problems can decrease your quality of life and the number of years you can live.

Obesity is measured by your body mass index or BMI. Your BMI is based on your weight and your height. Obesity is defined as having a BMI of 30 or more. A BMI over 25 is considered overweight, which can also affect your health. Being overweight or obese can increase your chance of getting:

- Type 2 diabetes
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol (or fat in the blood) levels
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Breast or colon cancer

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Ways to lose weight

1. Use more calories than you eat.
Eat less and exercise more to burn more calories. Eat healthy foods that are low in fat. Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables, including greens like kale, collards, and spinach. Eat whole grains such as barley, brown rice, farro, oats, quinoa, and wheat. But make sure to talk to your doctor before you change your diet.

2. Choose foods with fewer calories.
You can save calories by eating lean meats, baked (not fried) foods, low-fat or nonfat milk, and more fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables can make you feel full but don't have many calories.

3. Keep your body moving.
Try to get at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise each day for five days or more each week. Instead of watching a lot of TV, take a walk or go to the gym with a friend.

4. Cut out the sugar.
Don't drink sugary juices or sodas and avoid sweets. Focus on healthy snacks that are low in fat and calories. Drink more water. Water makes you feel full and has zero calories. It is also good for your body.

5. Keep track of the numbers.
Cutting between 500 and 1,000 calories a day can help you lose about one to two pounds each week. Take a slow and steady approach to losing weight. This approach will help you keep the pounds off for the long term. Many people write down which foods they eat throughout the day. This can help them eliminate unhealthy foods from their diet.

6. Manage your stress and get adequate sleep and rest.

Work with your doctor

Ask your doctor what your BMI should be and how many calories you should eat. Ask what kind of exercise is right for you. Losing even a few pounds can help you not get one of the diseases that result from being overweight or obese. For example, if you weigh 200 pounds, losing just 10 pounds could improve your blood pressure, cholesterol or blood sugar (diabetes measure) levels.

If you would like to learn about UnitedHealthcare Community Plan:

Please call Member Services at **1-800-318-8821, TTY 711**
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