



## ***SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS***

Affiliated with National Volunteer Outreach Network, Country Women's Council, U.S.A., Associated Country Women of the World and in partnership with Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service  
SCFCL website: <http://www.scfcl.com>

### **Healthy Weight Loss**

#### **Objectives:**

After the lesson, the participants will be able to

- 1) Understand strategies for healthy weight loss.
- 2) Know how to read food labels.
- 3) Implement strategies for healthy living.

#### **Lesson Overview/Introduction:**

42.5 percent of Americans are overweight or obese. Being overweight or obese is a risk factor for many chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers. Weight loss can be an important factor in reducing risk for chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, but it can be difficult to know how to achieve it in a healthy manner.

#### **Lesson:**

##### **The Importance of Healthy Lifestyle**

When working toward health-related goals, particularly when working toward weight loss goals, it is important to make choices that lead to an overall healthier lifestyle. A healthy lifestyle includes engaging in more physical activity, choosing healthier foods, and focusing on portion sizes. It is also important to form new, healthier habits as you make these changes so that you can sustain them long term. In order to reach and maintain a healthy weight, you should balance calories in and calories out. For weight loss, you will need to burn more calories than you take in.

##### **Physical Activity**

It is recommended that adults engage in at least 150 minutes of physical activity each week. This activity should be at a moderate pace or more. Your activity is moderate if you are able to talk while performing the activity but not sing. As you get more active, the amount and intensity of activity you need to reach a moderate pace based on your breathing will change. Your heart and lungs will get stronger so you will need to be more active to achieve the same moderate effect.

A variety of activity is recommended as well. Engaging in aerobic, resistance, and balance and flexibility exercises is beneficial to your health and is part of a healthy lifestyle. Aerobic activity is activity that engages your heart and lungs and improves your body's use of oxygen. Examples of aerobic activity include walking, running, dancing, and biking.

Resistance activity is activity that builds and strengthens your muscles. Examples of resistance activity include weight training, using resistance bands, squats, and climbing hills or stairs.

Balance and flexibility exercises improve your body's balance, which can help prevent falls, as well as stretch and lengthen your muscles, allowing them to become more flexible, which helps with mobility.

Being active burns calories. The more active you are, the more calories you burn, even while at rest. Try to incorporate more movement into your daily routine and think "move more, sit less," to help you burn more calories than you take in each day to achieve healthy weight loss.

## **Healthy Eating**

Healthy eating is another important factor in healthy weight loss. Having a variety of foods in your diet is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle. Aim to choose more whole foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, in addition to choosing healthy fats and lean proteins. Limit unhealthy fats like saturated and trans fats as well as heavily processed foods. Examples of healthy fats include avocados, olive oil, and nuts. Examples of saturated fats are fried foods, butter, and animal fats.

A key skill related to healthy eating is label reading. The nutrition facts panel, also called the food label, shows how much of each nutrient is in an item. Using the nutrition facts panel can help you understand the contents of a food and whether it is an item to choose or an item to limit.

To read a nutrition facts panel, first look at the serving size and servings per container. Everything on the label is based on the serving size. Servings per container will allow you to know how much of the package is a serving and give you context for the rest of the label if you eat more than one serving of the food. Next, look at the additional values on the label, such as calories, fat, added sugar, sodium, and protein, to decide if this is an item that can fit on your healthy plate or if it is an item that you want to limit. Aim to choose foods that are lower in calories, fat, added sugar, and sodium and higher in fiber, water, vitamins, minerals, and protein.

When reading the label, you do not need to focus on the percent daily values. These numbers are based on a 2,000 calorie a day diet which is not for everyone. Paying attention to the number of grams and milligrams on the left side of the label will be the most beneficial for understanding the nutritional content of the item and how it fits in with your healthy eating goals.

### *Portion Size*

Another important piece of healthy eating and healthy eating for weight loss is portion size and eating in moderation. Portion size is the amount of a food we eat. Serving size is the suggested amount of an item to eat by the manufacturer of a food product.

A healthy plate should be well-balanced and contain a variety of foods. The American Diabetes Association recommends that a healthy plate should be  $\frac{1}{2}$  non-starchy vegetables,  $\frac{1}{4}$  lean protein, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  grains and starches in addition to having a small amount of dairy and a small amount of fruit. Non-starchy vegetables include spinach, tomatoes, pepper, lettuce, cabbage, and brussels sprouts. Lean proteins include fish, poultry, eggs, beans, and tofu. Grains and starches include whole grain breads, rice, and pasta, as well as starchy vegetables such as potatoes, peas, and

corn. Dairy products include cheese, milk, and yogurt. Fruits include strawberries, grapes, apples, and bananas.

When choosing the items to go on your healthy plate, it is better to choose fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables over canned. Fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables will have less added sugars and sodium than canned. However, if you choose canned items, be sure to pour out the juice from the can and rinse its contents before eating in order to reduce the amount of extra sodium and sugar you consume.

When choosing dairy, look for items that are lower in fat, such as 1% or skim, over higher fat products like whole milk. Be mindful of added sugars that may appear in dairy products as well. Choose items that have less added sugars as part of your healthy plate.

As you begin to incorporate healthier eating strategies, it is important to remember moderation. While you want to choose more of the whole foods, lean proteins, and healthy fats mentioned earlier, everything can fit in a healthy diet in moderation. You do not need to completely eliminate your favorite foods in order to follow a healthy eating plan. Find ways to make your favorite foods a little healthier, like making healthy swaps in the recipe, while eating smaller portions of these items in order to still have the foods you enjoy.

### **Tracking Food and Activity**

Tracking your food and activity can help you achieve weight loss and understand your new, healthier habits. Tracking food and activity can help you understand the balance of calories in and out throughout your day.

There are many ways you can track your food and activity. It can be helpful to use things like food logs, a calendar, apps, or even fitness watches to help you understand your calories in and out throughout the day but choose the method that works best for you. When tracking, be sure to include as many details as you can to help you understand what you did and what you consumed. For activity, include what activity you engaged in, the level of intensity of the activity, and how long you engaged in the activity to help you understand how many calories you burned. For tracking your food, include details about what you ate, including condiments, dressings, and drinks, to understand how many calories you consumed.

For weight loss, you will want your calories consumed to be less than your calories burned. However, make sure this gap is not too large. Remember, your goal is to gain healthier habits while losing weight. A safe rate of weight loss is 1 to 2 pounds per week, or about 500 fewer calories consumed than out each day. Make sure you are achieving this calorie deficit by a mixture of eating and activity to help you build healthier habits and achieve weight loss.

### **Conclusion**

Healthy and sustainable weight loss can be achieved through physical activity, choosing healthier foods, and limiting portion size. Increase activity and choose more whole foods to begin to make healthy lifestyle changes that can impact weight. It is important to remember that a safe rate of

weight loss is 1 to 2 pounds a week. This helps you establish healthy habits that can lead to losing weight and keeping off weight as well as setting you up for healthier habits in the future. Focus on making healthy, sustainable lifestyle choices instead of having a goal of weight loss to enable you to achieve a goal of a healthier lifestyle while helping you achieve weight loss.

### Lesson Summary:

Reaching and maintaining a healthy weight is important for overall health and lowering risk for chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers. Following a healthy lifestyle and making changes to build healthier habits can help you achieve weight loss and maintain a healthy weight. A healthy lifestyle for weight management includes physical activity, choosing healthier foods, and controlling portion size.

### Suggested Activities:

As time allows, have participants practice tracking their food and physical activity on a blank sheet of paper. Participants can write down as much detail about what they ate for their most recent meal (food name, ingredients – if any, drinks, how much of each item) and what they did for their most recent physical activity (type of activity, duration). See below for some examples.

Example of food tracking:

Monday	Breakfast: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scrambled eggs with peppers, onions, and cheese</li><li>• 1 glass of milk</li></ul> Lunch <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sandwich with 2 slices of wheat bread, 1 slice of Swiss cheese, mayonnaise, 1 leaf of lettuce, 1 slice of tomato, 2 slices of deli turkey</li><li>• 1 glass of water</li><li>• 4 strawberries</li></ul>
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Example of physical activity tracking:

Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Walk in neighborhood 20 minutes, moderate</li><li>• Exercise video – 10 minutes; resistance bands for arms, moderate</li></ul>
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### Suggested Materials:

*How to avoid portion size pitfalls to help manage your weight.* Handout.  
[https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/pdf/portion\\_size\\_pitfalls.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/pdf/portion_size_pitfalls.pdf)

*Eat More, Weigh less? How to manage your weight without being hungry.* Handout.  
[https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/pdf/Energy\\_Density.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/pdf/Energy_Density.pdf)

*Health Benefits of Physical Activity for Adults*. Handout.

[https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/adults/pdfs/Health\\_Benefits\\_PA\\_Adults\\_Jan2021\\_H.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/adults/pdfs/Health_Benefits_PA_Adults_Jan2021_H.pdf)

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**Sources/References:**

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- Fryar CD, Carroll MD, Afful J. *Prevalence of overweight, obesity, and severe obesity among adults aged 20 and over: United States, 1960–1962 through 2017–2018.* NCHS Health E-Stats. 2020.
- *National Diabetes Prevention Program, Prevent T2.* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2021.