

# WEIGHT

I WILL

- ...reduce my risk of cancer and other diseases
- ...feel better
- ...have more energy and vitality
- ...reduce joint pain and have increased mobility

## CANCER AUSTRALIA RECOMMENDS:

- Achieving and maintaining a healthy body weight within a BMI range of 18.5 to 25 kg/m<sup>2</sup> to lower your risk of cancer, and
- Achieving and maintaining a waist circumference of below 94 cm (37 in) for men and below 80 cm (31.5 in) for women.

### MYTH

#### I'VE ALWAYS BEEN OVERWEIGHT, IT'S JUST MY NORMAL BODY SIZE

Although some people do have a predisposition to be overweight, having a balanced diet and active lifestyle can go a long way to countering a person's genetic inheritance. Find out if you are a healthy weight in order to live longer, feel better and protect against cancer.

- Measure your waist circumference – less than 94cm (37 in) for men and 80cm (31.5 in) for women means your abdominal fat is in check which will help to reduce your risk of cancer.
- Find out your body mass index (BMI) which calculates if you're a healthy weight for your height – between 18.5 and 25kg/m<sup>2</sup> is considered the normal range.

### MYTH

#### LOSING WEIGHT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR SOMEONE LIKE ME

While losing weight requires some lifestyle changes and a consistent balance of healthy eating and regular exercise, it is possible for everyone. Start today - make realistic goals and gradually build healthy eating and exercise habits through a number of simple changes. It's easier than you think to make small changes for a big impact.

- Eat a healthy diet – think quality not quantity and control your portion sizes, pack your lunch for work and snack healthier. Check out our Healthy Diet section for more great tips.
- Combine this with regular exercise – aim for 30 minutes every day. If you currently do no physical activity, start by doing some, and gradually build up. See our Exercise section for more information on getting started.
- Use the Eat for Health Calculators which will help you understand your daily energy and nutrient requirements.

### MYTH

#### I CAN'T GET MY KIDS TO STAY A HEALTHY WEIGHT AND BE ACTIVE

Obese children have a 25-50% chance of being obese adults, and this possibility can be as high as 78% for older obese teenagers. This increases their lifelong risk of cancer and other chronic diseases.

Teach them healthy habits at home so that they can grow and develop with the right amount of energy and nutrients with these tips.

- Get fussy little eaters interested in healthy food by using fresh produce with bright colours and interesting textures such as capsicums, carrots and strawberries and;
- Disguise vegetables and legumes in pasta sauces.
- Get your kids involved in cooking and growing food – you can educate them about different healthy foods as you make a nutritious meal.
- Stick the Healthy Eating Guide on the fridge so they can learn about the different food groups.
- Encourage your kids to take up a sport they enjoy, play in the park with friends, or go for a bike ride or walk with them.
- The occasional sweet treat is ok – as long as it's occasional.

### MYTH

#### I'M TOO OLD SO I DON'T NEED TO BOTHER

Nutrient and energy requirements differ at every age and life stage, but the importance of a healthy diet and physical activity doesn't change. In fact, as we get older we often need fewer kilojoules because we are less active, but we need a similar amount, if not more, of most nutrients. For example, as we age we need more calcium and vitamin D for bone health. There are plenty of ways older Australians can continue to eat healthy and be active:

- Follow the recommended number of serves from the five food groups and limit your intake of unhealthy foods and drinks. Why not try one of these healthy recipes.
- Keep physically active to maintain fitness and muscle strength. Try low to moderate intensity exercise such as walking, water aerobics or cycling.
- Add a few friends to the equation to make it more exciting – go for a walk with friends or cook a meal together.

### MYTH BUSTER



Cooking healthy for one is just as important as cooking for anyone else. Make it a habit to cook quick and easy meals and freeze leftovers to use throughout the week.

## FIND OUT MORE



@CancerAustralia

#checkyourcancerrisk

Losing Weight Guide – Health Direct Australia

Australian Guide to Healthy Eating – Australian Government Department of Health and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)

Healthy eating when you're older – Australian Government Department of Health and NHMRC

Healthy Weight Guide – Australian Government Department of Health

Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines – Australian Government Department of Health

Cancer Australia Position Statement – Lifestyle risk factors and the primary prevention of cancer

[canceraustralia.gov.au/yourcancerrisk](http://canceraustralia.gov.au/yourcancerrisk)