

MAKING SURE YOU ARE READY FOR A WEIGHT LOSS PROGRAM

Ask yourself these questions to see if you're ready to start a weight-loss program.

Your weight-loss success depends on your readiness to take on the challenge. These questions can help you judge your readiness scale.

- **Are you motivated to make long-term lifestyle changes that require eating healthy foods and exercising more?** Be honest. Knowing you need to make changes in your life and feeling up to the challenge are two different things. What are your biggest fears in taking on this commitment?
- **Are you free of distractions in your life that could affect your commitment to a weight-loss program?** You may set yourself up for failure if you're distracted by other major events in your life, such as marital problems, job stress, illness or financial worries. List any concerns.
- **Are you realistic about your weight-loss goal?** Remember, losing as little as 5 to 10 percent of your weight can improve your health if you're overweight or obese. This means, for example, losing 10 to 20 pounds (4.5 to 9 kilograms) if you weigh 200 pounds (91 kilograms). Do you know how much weight you can safely lose?
- **Do you have family and friends to support your weight-loss efforts?** It certainly helps to have someone in your corner. List some of the people you consider to be your biggest supporters. Then list any people you feel might get in the way of your success.
- **Do you believe that you can change your eating habits?** Sounds easy to do in theory, but in practice, it's often difficult. It's hard to cast aside established behaviors and develop new lifestyle habits, but it can be done. List your biggest concerns.

- **Are you willing to become more physically active?** Increasing your level of physical activity is essential to losing weight and keeping it off. What concerns do you have about exercising?
- **Do you have time to keep records of your food intake and physical activity?** Keeping records increases your chance of success. You'll be pleasantly surprised by how helpful it is to track your progress.
- **Are you willing to look at past successes and failures in weight loss and other areas of your life?** Learn from the past about what motivates you. Keep working to resolve barriers that might prevent success. List some past successes and failures and be ready to discuss these.
- **Do you view a healthy-weight program as a positive experience?** Losing weight doesn't have to be a bad experience. Most people find they feel better when they're more active and weigh less. List some healthy lifestyle habits that you currently enjoy
- **Have you resolved any eating disorders or other emotional issues that make it difficult for you to achieve a healthy weight?** If you have a tendency to binge, purge, starve or overexert when you exercise, or if you're depressed or anxious, you may need professional help. Please list these. Are you prepared to discuss them in a private non-judgmental setting?
- **Do you believe that a healthy weight is a lifelong commitment?** Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight is a lifelong process. There's no going back to your old behaviors. Are you ready to make a permanent change? Be honest. Would you rather starve yourself to lose 20 pounds for temporary satisfaction and then see it creep back or are you looking for permanent lifestyle change?

If you answered yes to all or most of these questions, you're ready to make the lifestyle changes necessary for permanent weight loss. We do not expect everyone to be 100% ready. If you have some areas of concern; discuss them with your lifestyle counselor. Only by being aware of the obstacles in your way can we begin to work with you to formulate a successful action plan.

THE PROS AND CONS OF CHANGE

There are some very good reasons to start a weight loss program. You know it will be healthier, you will look and feel better and your self esteem will increase. You also know that your current lifestyle may giving you some benefits that you are reluctant to leave behind (such as eating junk food or sweets to help alleviate stress.) You may have to buy new clothes or make changes to the way you cook which you may view as a negative aspect of being in the program. Write down some pros and cons of being in a weight loss program. This might give you some insight into some hurdles you may encounter along the way

PROS

CONS

PAY OFF

There has to be a pay-off for you to participate in the program and stay motivated. Imagine yourself at the end of the program. How do you feel? How is different from today? In what ways do you feel better?

