

# Weight Loss Tips

By Dr. Sandra Olic

**Eat.** Eating less seems like an obvious key to weight loss. However, it is also important to eat enough. Restricting calories lower than 1200 calories will slow metabolism and halt weight loss.

**Eat smaller meals more often.** People who eat 5 to 6 smaller meals are often leaner than those who eat the same amount of calories divided in 2 or 3 larger meals. The body can only process so many calories at once. Bigger meals cause greater insulin responses, meaning more of those calories will be stored as fat. It is important to stoke the metabolic fire with small amounts of food at regular intervals. It also means you will be less hungry before your next meal, making overeating less likely. This begins at breakfast. Breakfast eaters are also overall slimmer than those who do not eat breakfast.

**Eat whole foods.** Refined carbohydrates and sugars cause greater insulin responses than their whole grain counterparts. Whole grains, fruits and vegetables also contain fiber, which slows digestion and keeps you satisfied longer.

**Eat enough protein and fat.** Protein and fat also help keep you satisfied longer and cause a lower insulin response, as well as provide important nutrients and amino acids for brain chemistry. The better your brain chemistry, the less unhealthy cravings you will have.

**Drink water.** Sometimes we think we are hungry when we are really just thirsty.

**Keep a diet diary.** Often people do not realize what and how much they eat in a day. Journaling not only makes you conscious of what you are putting in your body but also helps uncover triggers for overeating, such as emotional eating, eating out of boredom or social overindulgence. With this new awareness, new more constructive behaviors can replace harmful ones. For example, if in your diet diary you realize you eat out of boredom, then find other activities in life that give you pleasure and do those things more often. If emotional eating or stress eating are challenges, then more stress relieving activities can help like exercise and yoga.

**Exercise.** In addition to burning calories, exercise builds muscle and muscle burns more calories at rest than does fat. It is important to engage in different activities and increase intensity so the body doesn't become accustomed to the same ones. And remember, muscle weighs more than fat. If the scale isn't moving much but your clothes are fitting better, you are losing fat and gaining muscle, which is a good thing! Always consult your Doctor before starting a new exercise program.

**Cheat.** Indulging in a few extra hundred calories one day a week will help prevent weight loss plateaus and keep your body on it's toes.

**See a medical professional.** Medical causes such as hormonal imbalances and food sensitivities can prevent weight loss. A Naturopathic Physician can order special lab tests in this case, treat the cause and prescribe lifestyle changes, dietary supplements and/or natural hormone replacement to help bring the body back into balance. In some cases, certain medical weight loss programs like the HCG diet protocol may be appropriate.