



## Forget the Diet: Eat Well and Live Lively

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January 20 through 26, 2008 is the 15th Annual Healthy Weight Week.

Thinking of going on a diet in the New Year? Think again.

Most diets result in ineffective, short-term weight loss and then quickly gaining back the pounds that were lost. Dieting disrupts normal eating, creates a preoccupation with food, can result in malnutrition, and can lead to eating disorders.

Instead, this year choose to eat well, live actively, and feel good about yourself and others. By eating well and being more physically active, excess weight will come off naturally. The key is to get more active. It takes time, but this is the healthy and lasting way to lose weight.

Eating normally typically includes three nutritious meals a day with breakfast being very important. Include one or two nutritious snacks to satisfy your hunger. Eat when you are hungry, and stop when you are satisfied.

What is a healthy weight?

A healthy weight is different for everyone. A person's weight is based on factors such as genes, food intake, and level of physical activity. Therefore, it is impossible to have one ideal weight that suits everybody. Healthy weight is not just about weight loss. It includes lifestyle, eating habits, and good nutrition, combined with physical activity. Eating in a healthy way provides the human body with the nutrients it needs to function, so what a person eats directly affects the body's well-being and a person's quality of life.

How does healthy weight influence a person's life?

Being at a healthy weight and eating healthy can enhance feelings of well-being and provide the needed energy to lead a fulfilling life. Maintaining a healthy weight is an important part of self-esteem, because your weight affects your body image, emotions, moods, and physical sensations.

What can be done to reach and stay at a healthy weight?

Efforts to get Americans to maintain a healthy weight begins with our Nation's children. Parents have an important role to play, because they are typically the primary source of information. More importantly, they are the primary role models when it comes to molding children's eating habits. Children learn from their parents what to eat, when to eat, and how much to eat. For children and adults alike, it is important to get in touch

with body signals that tell you when you are hungry, full, or have overeaten. Adults who wish to change their behaviors, attitudes, and lifestyle patterns in order to reach a healthy weight should begin by getting reliable information on nutrition. Local communities programs like Healthy Community Coalition's get Out and Live or GOAL in Franklin County and Move More in Kennebec and Somerset Counties can provide support and help to promote understanding of the importance of healthy weight to a good quality of life.

Sources: *Healthy Weight Network*, [www.healthyweightnetwork.com](http://www.healthyweightnetwork.com) and *SAMHSA's National Mental Health Information Center*, <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/highlights/January2006/weight/>

### Three reasons not to diet:

- Diets don't work; dieters regain weight and often regain more than they lost.
- Dieting disrupts normal regulation and throws the body into a stressful, defensive state.
- Dieting leads to disordered eating and is the primary precursor for eating disorders.