Sugary drinks are the number one product to cause weight gain in the modern diet. Weight gain around the abdomen often leads to metabolic syndrome. Continue reading to learn more about metabolic syndrome.

Did you know?

A healthy you starts now!

A healthy you looks like so much more than just losing weight. Commonly, media sources influences individuals that the way to become healthy is by losing weight. Although this may be true in some cases, it is not true all the time. The truth is, health goes far beyond weight loss or weight gain. Statistics have shown that many individuals who are clinically diagnosed as 'obese' are metabolically healthy, while many clinically diagnosed 'normal-weight' individuals have metabolic problems that are commonly associated with obesity. By focusing only on appearance, the goal of becoming healthy gets harder to achieve.

Take a deeper dive into your health!
Weight Loss

There are hundreds of fad diets, weight loss programs and straight up weight loss scams that are advising people on the "best way" to lose weight. However, studies have proven that the key to a successful weight loss is a healthy calorie-controlled diet combined with an increase of exercise.

6 clinically proven strategies for successful weight loss

Make sure that you are ready.
Successful long-term weight loss takes a lot of time, effort and energy. While it may not be best to prolong weight loss indefinitely, if recommended by a healthcare professional, it is important to make sure you are both mentally and physically ready to start making permanent lifestyle changes.

Ask yourself the following:
> What is my motivation to lose weight?
> Am I too distracted by other pressures?
> What is my relationship like with food? ex. Do I use food to cope?
> Am I willing to change my eating habits?

Find your inner motivation.
No one can make you lose weight or make you stick to your weight loss plan. Losing weight has to be something that you want for yourself. Although you do have to take responsibility for your weight loss journey behavior, it often helps have a team of support. Find people who listen to your concerns and feelings, but continue to push you toward your goal by reminding you of your initial motivation is key for a successful weight loss journey.

Set realistic goals.
Setting realistic goals sounds obvious, however often times the goals that are set are not able to be achieved. For a long-term healthy weight loss it is recommended to aim to lose 1 to 2 pounds per week. Depending upon your current weight, it is realistic to set a weight loss goal for 5% less of your current weight. This level of weight loss has been associated with lower the risk of chronic health conditions.

Walk 30 mins per day.
Add more fruits and veggies.
Create both progress and outcome goals.

Source: Mayo Clinic

Healthy Starts Now – Springdale Health Department
Enjoy healthier foods.
Changing eating habits so that they promote weight loss should include lowering the total calorie intake. Decreasing calorie intake does not mean giving up the satisfaction of food all together. One of the best ways to lower calorie consumption is by consuming more fruits, vegetables and whole grains in your daily diet.

Weight loss tips:
> Eat at least four servings of vegetables and three servings of fruits daily.
> Replace white/processed grains with 100% whole grains.
> Manage the amount of fats that are consumed. Try to consume healthy fats such as, olive oil, avocados, nuts, nut butters and oils.

Get active!
Although it is possible to lose weight without exercise, increasing the amount of exercise in your life helps to burn the excess calories that were consumed. Daily or even weekly exercise offers numerous health benefits. Some of these benefits include, improvement of your mood, the cardiovascular system, and immune system.

Exercise is also a great way to help maintain weight loss. Studies have shown that those who maintain their weight loss over the long-term exercise regularly.

Ride a bike.
Go on a jog.
Do yoga.

Change your perspective.
Choosing to eat healthy and exercise for a short period of time won’t lead to long-term weight loss success. In order to be successful in your weight loss journey it is important to turn the journey as a new lifestyle. These habits of choosing healthy foods and exercising regularly will become a new way of life.

This journey will most likely have a few setbacks, which will make you question the journey. However, instead of giving up completely, just start fresh the next morning. Always remember that these alterations you are making are going to change your life. It will not just happen overnight. Stay strong, you got this!

Getting healthy is not a two-week process, it’s a change of lifestyle.
- Kate Hudson

Source: Mayo Clinic
Weight Gain

Being considered lean is often viewed by society as healthy, however, being underweight is a concern for poor nutrition. Being underweight can lead to more complications in pregnancy as well as various health conditions. If you have concerns about being under weight, seek help from a healthcare provider.

Healthy ways to promote weight gain:

Eat more frequently.
- Eat to six smaller meals in order to avoid feeling full quickly.

Choose nutrient-rich foods.
- Choose whole grain; fruits and vegetables; dairy products; lean proteins sources; and nuts and seeds.

Try smoothies and shakes.
- Drink smoothies or healthy shakes made of milk and fresh or frozen fruit, and sprinkle in some ground flaxseed.

Watch when you drink.
- Some find drinking before meals ruins their appetites, in order to minimize that drink 30 mins after each meals.

Make every bite count.
- Snack on nutrient dense foods.

Top it off.
- Add extra calories to each of your meals.

Have an occasional treat.
- Even if you are underweight be mindful of eating excess sugar. However, an occasional treat is OK.

Exercise.
- Strength training can help with weight gain by building muscle mass.

Source: NIDDK
If you are struggling with weight management, it may be helpful to initiate more healthy eating habits as well as increase the amount of regular activity.

A well balanced diet is key to maintaining your weight is by a healthy lifestyle. Factors of a healthy lifestyle include healthy eating habits, adequate physical activity, optimal sleep, and limited/controlled stress. Each one of these factors play a vital role in affecting an individual's weight.

Each person is unique, therefore the amount of physical activity that is required depends on their weight goals. Some ways to incorporate physical activity into your lifestyle include taking walks, joining an exercise class, or even going for a job. There are a lot of different opportunities that increase physical activity level.

There are a variety of ways to start incorporating nutritious foods into your diet. Each person has their own unique tastes and foods they prefer. Therefore, it is really important to find nutritious foods you like. It makes the lifestyle change of eating healthy foods a little less difficult and more likely to be maintained. Incorporating nutritious foods into your diet could include eating more fruits and vegetables at every meal, or choosing foods that are nutrient dense. Nutrient dense foods are foods that include lots of vitamins and minerals.

Overall, a well balanced lifestyle is the key to successful weight management. Maintaining your weight within the normal range is important for healthy aging. Weight that is well maintained helps to prevent the onset of many health conditions. No matter where you are at in your life it is never too late to start making changes to get back on track. Healthy starts now!

Source: NIDDK