

Weekly Wellness Tip

Keeping the Weight Off

It's hard to lose weight. Shedding pounds and trimming down takes dedication, discipline, and great effort. You might find that once you finally get the pounds off, staying at your goal weight can be as tough as losing the weight in the first place.

What are the risks of gaining the weight back?

Weight cycling is the repeated loss and regain of weight. Besides returning to an unhealthy weight, not keeping the pounds off can have other negative effects, such as:

- Depression and anxiety (stress) about losing weight
- Bingeing or eating a lot of food while feeling out of control
- More difficulty losing weight as you get older

Studies have shown that women who weight-cycle gain more weight over time than women who don't.

Here are a few tips to help you stay at your goal weight:

- **Don't go overboard.** When you hit your goal weight, you still have to pay attention to the food you eat. People will often binge (eat uncontrollably) or forget their healthy eating habits once the weight is off. This is especially true during vacations or holidays. But, when people do this, they risk gaining weight again. Once you are at your goal weight, add only 200 calories of low-fat food to your daily diet. If you still lose weight, you can add a little more, but keep watching your calories closely.
- **Weigh yourself weekly.** Even though you're no longer dieting, you still need to keep an eye on your weight. Get on the scale once a week to make sure your weight isn't creeping back up. If you start to regain weight, take action right away to get back to your goal. The sooner you stop the weight creep, the better your chances of maintaining your goal weight for good.
- **Get support from others.** If you joined a support group to help you lose weight, don't quit just because you've reached your goal. Most people who reach their goal weight will start to regain the pounds within five years. Support groups help keep you on track and require you to monitor your weight on a regular basis.
- **Be careful when eating out.** Fast food, buffet-style meals and sweet desserts can quickly put the pounds back on. Portion control is still very important to remain at your goal weight. When eating out, try to plan ahead and order foods that will keep you on track.
- **Stay active.** Most weight loss programs include some form of exercise. Once you hit your goal weight, it might be tempting to stop your physical training. If you change the amount of exercise you do each day, you also have to change your calorie intake. The best way to keep the pounds off is to keep track of your physical activities and commit to stay with your workout or exercise plan.

Source: UnitedHealthcare



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