

# Promoting A Healthy Weight

## What's my ideal body weight?

There is no such thing as an ideal body weight. A healthy weight is the weight your body naturally settles into when you consistently eat nutritiously, are physically active and balance the calories you eat with the physical activity you do. With the current emphasis on overweight and obesity, it may be easy to forget that good health is the ultimate goal and that a healthy lifestyle – not a specific body size, shape or weight – is the avenue to attain that goal. Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight is part of an ongoing lifestyle that can help you be your best and compete to your potential.

Each person is unique in how they are built. Your focus should be less about the numbers on the scale and more about your health in general. Use these indicators as a gauge:

- **PERFORMANCE** – Are you performing at the top of your game? Setting personal records? Or are you struggling to reach your peak athletic potential?
- **IMMUNE SYSTEM** – Are you staying healthy? Avoiding colds and the flu? Or are you getting sick frequently?
- **RECOVERY** – Are you able to recover in time to perform for your next competition, race, match or game? Or do your muscles feel worn down and unable to keep up with your athletic demands?
- **SLEEP** – Are you sleeping well? Getting 7-10 hours per night? Did you know that being under- or overweight can affect your sleep patterns?

Performance, immune health, recovery and sleep all tell you about the health of your body. And a healthy body is the key to athletic success.

## What is my body trying to tell me?

Hunger and satiety (feeling full) are two signals that tell you when and how much to eat. When your stomach is empty, it tells your brain “it's time to eat,” leading to the sensation of hunger. Toward the end of a meal, the feeling of fullness tells you “it's time to stop eating.” It may take 20-30 minutes for your stomach to feel full, so slow down and give yourself time to process fullness. Both hunger and satiety help us maintain a healthy body weight – if we learn to listen to the cues.

## Let your stomach be your guide

In order to listen to your body, it is best to think before you eat and pay attention as you eat.

Before you eat, ask yourself these questions...

Am I eating because I'm hungry?

- If so, how do you know you are hungry? Did your stomach growl or ache?
- If you aren't hungry, what caused you to want to eat? Were others around you eating? Is it mealtime? Are you sad or bored? Are external cues prompting you to eat?

When you stop eating, ask yourself these questions...

Did I stop eating because I was starting to feel full?


How did I know I was getting full?

- Think about what “moderate fullness” feels like to you. Is it simply that the feeling of hunger is gone? Or is your stomach pushing against your waistband?

If I wasn't full, why did I stop?

- Did you stop because the plate was empty or because others were finished eating?
- If so, are you still hungry or are you getting full? Do you need to eat more or did you satisfy your hunger?

**RULE  
of THUMB**



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## PEAK POINT

Avoid getting too hungry – sometimes if we wait too long to eat, we may end up eating more than we really need.

## Ask the Sports Dietitian



**Q: My coach is always on me about eating breakfast. What's the big deal? It's only breakfast.**

**A:** True, it's just one meal, but breakfast is an important meal. Just as your car won't run without fuel in its tank, your body doesn't work to its potential when you don't adequately fuel it in the morning. Not only can eating breakfast help with weight management, it can also improve nutrient intake, enhance your sports performance, and improve your grades. If you don't have time for breakfast at home, or don't feel like eating first thing in the morning, plan to have breakfast a little later. Bring fruit and yogurt from home to eat before school, or eat breakfast at school.

Try these recipes!

### Yogurt Parfait

- 8 oz. low-fat vanilla yogurt
- ½ cup fresh fruit (try sliced strawberries, sliced banana, blueberries or raspberries)
- ½ cup granola

Layer yogurt, fruit and granola in a glass. Serve immediately.

**Q: Don't I need to eat more protein to build muscle?**

**A:** Simply eating a high-protein diet or taking protein supplements will not build muscle. The winning formula for building muscle is a combination of smart food choices – pre- and post-exercise – and strength training. Overloading muscles with resistance exercise makes them bigger. Protein from foods such as milk, yogurt, lean meat, fish, eggs and beans supply the building blocks for muscle growth and development, and a post-exercise nutrition plan aids in muscle recovery and repair.

### Anytime Burrito

Too late for breakfast? Too early for lunch?

Scramble up an egg. While it's cooking, add some cheese, diced green pepper, and onion. Wrap in a tortilla and enjoy with salsa.

For more recipes, visit [NationalDairyCouncil.org](http://NationalDairyCouncil.org).



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