

## Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

# Weight reduction: Advice for Asian People

**This leaflet provides information on healthy eating for Asian people who would like to lose weight.**

### Introduction

People become overweight and obese when too much fat gathers in the body and this presents a risk to health.

Larger portions, irregular meals and lack of daily physical activity all contribute to weight gain.

Being overweight is a major risk factor for a number of chronic diseases including diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers. These health problems are largely preventable. The key to success is to achieve a good balance between calories consumed and calories used.

### Health benefits of weight loss

In addition to feeling more energetic, losing 10% of your body weight has many health benefits.

#### It can help to reduce:

- Total cholesterol
- Blood Pressure
- Risk of type 2 diabetes
- Risk of heart disease
- Risk of certain types of cancer
- Stress

#### It can help to improve:

- Joint pain
- Breathlessness
- Back pain
- Sleep apnoea
- Fertility, polycystic ovarian syndrome
- Life expectancy



## Patient Information

### How to lose weight

You can lose weight if you:

- Restrict the excess calories in your diet – aim for a healthy balanced diet.
- Burn off the excess fat in the body – increase your activity levels and aim for a 10-20% weight reduction.

### A healthy diet is based on the following principles:

- Eat 3 meals a day at regular intervals and do not skip meals. Fasting or skipping meals will not help in weight reduction. Instead it might lead to craving for food where you end up snacking more often.
- Healthy and balanced - Include all the food groups in balanced proportions to have a healthy diet.
- Be careful about your portion sizes. Reduce the extra calories by reducing the portion sizes.
- Eat fewer foods that are high in fats and sugars.
- Include fibre in diet – fibre keeps you fuller for longer as it is slowly digested.
- Drink plenty of sugar free fluids.

### Healthy Balanced Diet

The Food Standard Agency has produced 'The eatwell plate' as a guide to healthy eating. The following eatwell plate shows the proportions of different food groups that should be present in the diet. For more information on the eatwell plate look on the website:

[www.eatwell.gov.uk](http://www.eatwell.gov.uk)



## Patient Information

### Healthy eating with South Asian foods

Healthy eating is about eating a variety of foods and getting the balance right. A healthy balanced diet is one that includes all the food groups in balanced proportions. There are basically five food groups.

#### The five food groups

- Chapattis, rice, bread, cereals and potatoes;
- Fruit and vegetables;
- Pulses, dhal, fish, meat and nuts;
- Milk and dairy products;
- Foods high in fat and/or sugar.

#### Chapattis, rice, bread, cereals and potatoes

- Cereals and millets are the main source of energy in the diet. But we tend to have too big a portion.
- Cereals like rice (white, brown, basmati) and wheat (chapattis, naan, pulka, kulcha, bread) are also source of nutrients like calcium and iron. Whole grains are important sources of B vitamins and fibre in the diet.
- Millets like bajra, ragi, jowar and barley are rich in minerals and fibre.
- Choose wholegrain/wholemeal varieties wherever possible. Good choices include wholemeal chapattis, Basmati rice, brown rice, wheat bran and wholemeal bread.
- High fibre foods provide bulk and make you feel full. Fibre also prevents constipation and other bowel problems.
- Ghee is high in fat, so keep its use to a minimum. Avoid using it in chapatti dough and do not eat too much briyani or pulav. Keep them plain to avoid the extra calories.

#### Fruits and vegetables

- Fruit and vegetables are good sources of vitamins, minerals, fibre and antioxidants in the diet. They are also low in fat and calories.
- Research shows that eating plenty of vegetables and some fruit may help reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke and some cancers.
- Aim for minimum 5 portions of a variety of vegetables and fruit; have 1 or 2 pieces of fruit; vegetables have a lot less calories than fruits; dried fruit have concentrated sugar.
- Fresh, frozen, dried, tinned or cooked – all can be included.
- Include no more than 1 small glass (150 ml) of pure fruit juice a day.

#### Portion Sizes – Fruits

Small Sized	Medium Sized	Large Sized	Dried Fruits
1 handful grapes 2 satsumas 3 dates	1 apple, banana guava, pear orange	1 slice papaya 1 slice melon, 1 slice pineapple 2 slice mango	1 tablespoon raisins, figs 1 handful banana chips

#### Portion Sizes – Vegetables (Aim for half a plate)

<b>Green Vegetables</b>	8 cauliflower florets, 2 broccoli, ½ karela
<b>Cooked Vegetables</b>	3 heaped tblspn of carrots, beans, okra, cabbage 2 heaped tblspn of cooked palak, fenugreek

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<b>Salads</b>	2 inch cucumber, 1 cereal bowl lettuce 7 cherry tomato, 3 celery sticks
<b>Pulses and Beans</b>	3 tblspn chick pea, lentils

For more information: [www.5aday.nhs.uk](http://www.5aday.nhs.uk)

### **Pulses, Dhal, Fish, Meat and Nuts**

- Dhal like Tur (Red gram dhal), bengal gram dhal, black gram dhal, kesari dhal are good sources of protein, minerals and B vitamins.
- Pulse, dhal and legumes are low in fat compared to meat, fish and poultry.
- Choose more of whole dhal, pulses and beans as they are good sources of fibre. Cow pea, green gram dhal whole, field beans, rajmah, soya beans, bengal gram whole/channa yellow and brown are all high in fibre.
- Meat, fish, poultry eggs and nuts are all good sources of protein as well as fat. So keep the portion sizes small, e.g. 60-85 grams meat or poultry, 120-140 grams of fish or pulses, 1- 2 tablespoon of nuts (palm full).
- Use lean meat and trim off visible fat.
- Avoid using lamb or chicken with fat for dishes like biryani to make it tasty as this is not healthy.
- Restrict dishes like Chicken 65, fish fry, egg or prawn bajji, which requires deep fat frying.
- Switch to fish, chicken or mutton gravy rather than curry forms which use more oil. Avoid using too much coconut milk or cream in korma.

### **Milk and Dairy products**

- Milk and dairy products are good sources of calcium. This group is essential for healthy bones and teeth.
- Aim for three servings a day, for example, small pot of low fat yoghurt, 200ml milk, 25 grams cheese or paneer.
- Select low fat varieties like semi skimmed or skimmed milk, low fat or diet yoghurt, low fat cheese (Edam or cottage cheese) and low fat cheese spreads.
- Use semi skimmed milk to make curd, paneer, kheer or payasam.
- Use low fat yoghurt for making butter milk, lassi or for thickening gravy.

### **Foods containing fat and/or sugar**

Sugar, jaggery, honey, palm sugar, sugar syrup: these all contain only calories and no other nutrients. Using these daily might lead to weight gain and dental decay.

- Try using sweeteners and sugar free drinks.
- Always measure oil for cooking. Avoid pouring oil directly in to pan for cooking.
- Do not use more than one tablespoon of oil for curry. Drain off excess oil from curries.
- Do not use more than 1 teaspoon of oil for seasoning dhal or chutneys.
- Do not reuse the oil used for frying to make curries or other dishes.
- Microwave papodoms or dried chilli rather than frying them in oil.

### **Salt**

- Too much salt can raise your blood pressure. It is recommended to have no more than 6 grams of salt per day (1 teaspoon).
- Avoid adding salt at the table.
- Avoid salty foods like pickles, salted nuts or crisps.
- Avoid adding salt to curd rice or cooking rice with salt.

### **Drinks**

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- Drink at least 1.5 -2 litres of fluid a day.
- Plain water is best.
- Choose unsweetened squash, low calorie drinks and no more than 1 small glass of fresh juice per day.

## Physical activity

- Physical activity combined with healthy eating is important for any weight management programme.
- Physical activity improves energy expenditure and this helps in energy balance and weight control.
- Along with weight loss, physical activity helps reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes, colon and breast cancer. It also helps too reduce blood pressure and cholesterol.
- At least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity five days per week is recommended for adults.
- Some examples of moderate activity are
  - Brisk walking
  - Dancing
  - Gardening
  - Household and domestic chores
  - Active involvement in games and sports with children or walking pets.

## How fast should you lose weight?

To lose 1 kg of fat you would need to reduce your kilocalorie intake by 3500 Kilocalories per week, by eating less and exercising more.

The recommended maximum rate of weight loss is 0.5 to 1 kg per week (1-2 lb). To achieve this, reduce your calorie intake by 500 to 1000 Kilocalories per day.

This can be achieved by:

- Reducing the portion size of energy dense foods;
- Reducing the amount of fat you eat;
- Reducing the amount of added sugar you eat;
- Increasing foods with a lower energy density (vegetables, fruits and low fat foods);
- Increasing the amount of moving and physical activity daily;

## Change for health

### Shopping

Avoid buying foods high in fat and sugar. Choose low fat, low calorie varieties. Make a list of healthy foods and only shop for what you need.

### Cooking methods

Avoid frying foods and cooking curries with a lot of oil. Grilling, baking, steaming, pressure cooking are healthier ways of cooking food. For example, grilled cutlets and steamed dhoklas are healthier options.

### Cooking oil

Avoid using ghee and butter and lard in cooking. Use small amounts of rapeseed oil, vegetable oil, corn oil, gingelly oil or olive oil. For example, Palak paneer is a healthier option than paneer butter masala.

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### Behaviour changes

Avoid eating just because you are bored or upset. Eating food while you are upset is not a solution but a diversion. There are other healthier diversions like talking to a friend, going out for a walk, or reading books, which are good for both mind and body. Avoid eating whilst watching TV. Enjoy eating your food slowly.

### Healthy eating habits

Improve your dietary habits. Restrict snacking on high fat and high sugar foods and choose healthier options.

### Parties and special occasions

Treat yourself occasionally. If you party often try selecting smaller portions and healthy options and work off the excess calories later.

### Be more active

Losing weight may be easy to begin with. But to maintain weight loss you need to be more active. Find ways of being active that you enjoy and that fit in with your daily life. For example, walking to the shops, collecting children from school, using stairs instead of lifts.

<b>Eat less</b>	<b>Choose instead</b>
Butter Naan, paratha, poori	Plain chapathi, stuffed (vegetable) chapathi
Biryani, Pulav	Plain rice with gravy or dhal
Potato chips, roast potatoes	Mashed potatoes, boiled potatoes
Ghee dosa, fried idlis	Plain dosa, Idli, kichdi (without ghee)
Chicken/mutton curry, chicken 65, chicken lollypop, deep fried mutton balls and fish fry	Chicken/Mutton/ Fish gravy Kebabs
Coconut or cream based kurma	Gravy without coconut
Butter, ghee, margarine	Low fat spread
Sweets like gulab jamun, rasagulla, laddu, jilebi, halwa	Milk based sweets like rasmalai,
Deep fried savouries like Bombay mixture, salted or masala peanuts/ Dhal	Roasted unsalted peanuts, roasted dhal,
Full fat milk, condensed milk, whole milk yoghurt, single or double cream, creamy lassi	Semi-skimmed /skimmed milk, low fat or diet yoghurt, buttermilk made from low fat yoghurt.
Deep fried papadoms, furfur, sago or rice vathal	Microwave papadoms
Deep fried savouries like samosa, bajji, pakora, bonda, vada	Steamed dhokla, pav bhajji, bhelpuri
Coconut chutney, peanut chutney	Mint/coriander chutney, dhal chutney, tomato chutney, onion chutney

