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# LOSE 20 POUNDS THIS YEAR!



TURN THE  
PAGE TO  
SEE YOUR  
1,500-CALORIE  
MEAL PLAN.



## 10 steps to losing 20 pounds ... and keeping it off By Theresa Gawlas Medoff

Are you part of the 68 percent? That's the percentage of people in the United States who are overweight or obese, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Maybe you need to lose just a little, or maybe you could stand to drop quite a few pounds.

Either way, losing 20 pounds will make a big difference to your overall health. Countless studies have shown that losing 10 percent of your body weight—that's 15-25 pounds for many people—can have dramatic health benefits. It can lower cholesterol, blood pressure and blood sugar; alleviate sleep apnea; lower your cancer risk; take pressure off your joints; and give you more energy.

So much has been written about dieting, and there seem to be so many different diets to choose from, that beginning your weight loss journey can feel overwhelming. That's why we turned to local experts for their advice on how to lose 20 pounds.

### FIND YOUR MOTIVATION

Do you want to lose weight because you have a special event coming up? That's a so-so reason. Is it because you want to feel better and have more energy? Because your doctor said lose 20 pounds or go on diabetes medication? The latter reasons are more likely to keep you inspired.

"The best motivation revolves around making yourself feel good. Reasons like vanity or pleasing a spouse or winning a bet, they don't really stick," says Alex Bianchi, D.O., who works with patients through his Hockessin-based private >

► practice, Bianchi Medical Weight Loss. People who stick with a weight-loss program, he adds, are those who lose some weight and start to see and feel the health benefits.

Theodore Elder of Newark was strongly motivated to lose weight. "I want to be around to see my grandchildren—Allison, 11, and Alek, 7—grow up," he says. "I had high blood pressure, high cholesterol and was pre-diabetic, all problems that were exacerbated by my weight." Six months ago, Elder began Fit4Life, a one-on-one weight-management program at Christiana Care Health System's Weight Management Center. So far he's lost 38 pounds, dropping from 262 to 214.

### CONSULT A WEIGHT-LOSS SPECIALIST

Perhaps you've dieted before and failed to lose the pounds—or you lost weight, then gained it back. Don't blame yourself, and don't give up. Chances are you were making poor choices because you didn't know better, and you probably didn't have the support you needed to understand what was going on in your body and mind and how to regain control.

"There's a lot of unreliable information out there," says Kim Tran, director of Christiana Care Health System's Weight Management Center. "Our registered dietitians and the doctors and other medical professionals on our staff can highlight what is useful and accurate and what is not. Our experts are also trained to work with any medical issue and any area of concern. We approach each patient as an individual."

Options at Christiana Care that work best for someone who needs to lose a moderate amount of weight include Fit4Life and a group program called Weight Smart.

You can also choose to work one-on-one with a doctor and/or a registered dietitian. Bianchi recommends looking for a physician certified, as he is, by the American Board of Obesity Medicine.

"Unfortunately, there's not a lot of emphasis in medical school on how to help patients lose weight," Bianchi says, "but a physician who is board-certified in the weight-loss field has learned a great deal about obesity, which is a disease in itself with physical, chemical, psychological and emotional aspects."

Fabricio Alarcon, M.D., also board-certified in bariatric medicine, runs Healthy Outcomes Medical Weight Loss in Georgetown. "For years we've looked at obesity and weight gain as cosmetic issues," he says. "We now recognize that it's a medical problem. There are a lot of factors to take into account ►

## 1,500 Calorie Meal Plan

(Most active women who would like to lose weight can do so on 1,500 calories a day. Most active men can eat 1,800 calories and lose weight. However, everyone has different calorie requirements, so check with a weight-loss specialist for a specific plan for you.)

### Average per day:

1,526 calories, 49 gm. fat (28 percent of calories),  
83 gm. of protein (21 percent of calories),  
200 gm. of carbohydrates (51 percent of calories), 1,864 mg. sodium

### DAY 1

#### Breakfast

- 1 whole grain English muffin
- 2 tsp. Smart Balance spread
- 1 wedge Laughing Cow cheese
- 1 egg scrambled in 1 tsp. canola oil

#### Lunch

##### Tuna Sandwich:

- 2 slices light whole wheat bread
- ½ can water-packed tuna
- 2 tbsp. olive oil mayonnaise
- Lettuce and tomato slices
- 1 large apple
- 100 calorie pack of Wheat Thins

#### Snack

- 2 tbsp. almonds
- 2 tbsp. dried cherries

#### Dinner

- 3 oz. skinless chicken breast, grilled
- 1 medium red potato with 2 tbsp. plain Greek yogurt
- 1 cup carrots, steamed
- 1 tsp. Smart Balance spread
- 3 cups tossed salad
- 2 tbsp. light dressing

#### Snack

- 3 oz. Greek yogurt with fruit
- 2/3 cup fresh or frozen berries

### DAY 2

#### Breakfast

- 1 small banana
- 1 tbsp. chopped nuts
- 1½ cups Cheerios
- 1 cup skim milk

#### Lunch

##### Turkey Bagel Sandwich:

- 1 small whole wheat bagel
- 1 oz. low-fat cheese
- 2 oz. low-sodium turkey breast
- 2 tsp. honey mustard
- 1 cup baby carrots with 1 tbsp. light ranch dressing

#### Snack

- 1 small pear sliced and dipped in
- 3 oz. fruit or honey Greek yogurt

#### Dinner

(broil chicken breasts for lunch tomorrow)

- 5 oz. broiled fish with lemon pepper and 2 tsp. olive oil
- 1 ear of corn
- 1 cup broccoli, steamed
- 2 tsp. Smart Balance spread

#### Snack

- 1 Kashi granola bar
- 1 cup fresh cherries

### DAY 3

#### Breakfast

- 1 cup oatmeal (1/3 cup uncooked) with 1 tsp. brown sugar, 1 tbsp. chopped walnuts, 1 tbsp. raisins
- 1 cup skim milk

#### Lunch

##### Chicken ranch sandwich:

- 2 slices light whole wheat bread
- 3 oz. grilled chicken
- 1 oz. low-fat cheese
- Lettuce, tomato slices
- 1 tbsp. light ranch dressing
- 1 cup grapes



**FAT**  
5 pounds

**SODA**  
12 oz. can =  
150 calories, 10 tsp. sugar  
32 oz. cup =  
400 calories, 25 tsp. sugar

**ALMONDS**  
Suggested serving  
1 ounce = 170 calories  
Typical serving  
2 ounces = 340 calories

**KASHI GO LEAN  
CRUNCH CEREAL**  
Suggested serving  
1 cup = 190 calories  
Typical serving  
2 cups = 380 calories

**FAST FOOD  
FRENCH FRIES**  
Kid's size =  
100 calories, 5 grams of fat  
Large =  
500 calories, 25 grams of fat

*“There’s a lot of unreliable information out there.”*

– Kim Tran, director of Christiana Care Health System’s Weight Management Center



**Dr. Fabricio Alarcon runs Healthy Outcomes Medical Weight Loss in Georgetown.**

› when trying to lose weight. That's why it's important for a doctor and patient to work together to develop a weight-loss goal and a plan."

There are two main factors that relate to obesity, Alarcon says: the brain and metabolism. The brain signals when to eat—and when people are overweight, it's often the case that the brain is telling them to

*"It's important for a doctor and patient to work together to develop a weight-loss goal and plan."*

—Dr. Fabricio Alarcon

eat for reasons other than hunger. Someone might have imbalances in the chemicals in the brain that control appetite and cravings, Alarcon explains, or they might eat out of stress, depression or simple habit.

It's also possible that your metabolism is out of whack, possibly because of what and how you've been eating. "Metabolism relates to what your body does with what you eat," Alarcon says. "If your metabolism is out of balance, you won't gain and lose weight normally."

Alarcon and Bianchi check patients' metabolic panels, including thyroid, cholesterol and blood glucose, in addition to taking a medical history to identify medical conditions that could interfere with a weight-loss program.

#### EVALUATE YOUR EATING HABITS

A weight-loss specialist can evaluate your food intake and eating habits to identify changes you need to make in your diet.

"I wasn't conscious of how much I was eating, and I also learned that I was eating too many carbs," says Terri Bradley of Lewes, a patient of Alarcon who lost 40 pounds in 11 months. "They gave me sheets to follow that detailed what I can eat and how much. I'm not saying it's easy, because it isn't, but this is the easiest time I've ever had losing weight."

Many people consume more calories than they realize, in part because our ideas of portion size are skewed. That's why it's important to become educated about what and how much you should be eating, says Aymi Wyatt, a registered dietitian and medical nutrition therapist with Beebe Medical Center in Lewes. >

#### Snack

1¼ cups fresh, cubed fruit

#### Dinner

2 turkey meatballs (93 percent lean) (2 oz. total)  
½ cup marinara sauce  
1 cup cooked whole-grain spaghetti (cook extra for lunch tomorrow)  
2 tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese  
3 cups tossed salad with 1 tbsp. olive oil, 1 tbsp. balsamic vinegar

#### Snack

6 cups (½ bag) 94 percent fat-free microwave popcorn

#### DAY 4

##### Breakfast

1 cup fresh berries  
French toast:  
2 slices light whole-wheat bread  
1 egg  
2 tbsp. skim milk  
Dash of cinnamon  
Dash of vanilla extract  
2 tbsp. light syrup

##### Lunch

Italian pasta salad:  
¾ cup cooked whole-grain pasta  
1/3 cup chick peas  
1 oz. low-fat shredded cheese  
1 cup diced raw vegetables  
3 tbsp. light Italian dressing  
1 single serving Mandarin oranges

##### Snack

1 medium apple  
1 wedge Laughing Cow cheese  
½ cup skim milk

##### Dinner

Kashi frozen chicken fettuccine  
1 cup steamed baby carrots with  
2 tsp. Smart Balance spread

##### Snack

6 oz. Greek yogurt with fruit

## DAY 5

### Breakfast

- 1 medium apple
- 1 whole grain English muffin
- 2 tbsp. peanut butter
- 1 cup skim milk

### Lunch

- 1 cup lentil or bean soup
- 3 cups tossed salad 2 tbsp. ranch dressing
- 1 small whole wheat roll with 1 tsp. Smart Balance spread

### Snack

- ½ cup low-fat cottage cheese
- ½ cup diced tomato
- Ground black pepper

### Dinner

- 4 oz. shrimp sauteed with 2 tsp. olive oil, lemon juice and Old Bay seasoning
- ¾ cup cooked brown rice
- 1½ cups steamed California blend vegetables
- 2 tsp. Smart Balance spread

### Snack

- 1½ cups cubed, mixed fruit
- 2 tbsp. low-fat granola
- 2 tbsp. fat-free Cool Whip

## DAY 6

### Breakfast

- 1 whole grain English muffin
- 2 tsp. Smart Balance spread
- 1 egg scrambled in 1 tsp. canola oil

### Lunch

- Chicken Sandwich:
  - 2 slices light whole-wheat bread
  - 2 oz. grilled chicken
  - 1 oz. low-fat cheese
  - 2 tsp. honey mustard
  - Lettuce and tomato slices
- 1 large apple
- 1 oz. baked potato chips

### Snack

- Snack Mix:
  - 2 tbsp. mixed nuts
  - 2 tbsp. raisins
  - 2 tbsp. low-fat granola

### Dinner

- 4 oz. boneless center-cut pork loin
- ¾ cup cooked whole-grain noodles
- 1 cup steamed spinach
- 2 tsp. Smart Balance spread

### Snack

- ½ cup pears, canned in juice, sprinkled with cinnamon
- 1 wedge Laughing Cow cheese

## DAY 7

### Breakfast

- Bob Evans' Be Fit Breakfast:
  - Scrambled egg whites, cranberry multigrain sidecakes, sugar-free syrup and fresh fruit

### Lunch

- 6 oz. fruit Greek yogurt
- 1 cup fresh or frozen berries
- 2 tbsp. low-fat granola
- 1 tbsp. chopped walnuts

### Snack

- 6 cups (½ bag) 94 percent fat-free microwaveable popcorn

### Dinner

- 3 oz. skinless beef tenderloin, grilled
- 1 medium baked potato with 2 tbsp. plain Greek yogurt
- 1 tsp. Smart Balance spread
- 3 cups tossed salad
- 2 tbsp. light dressing
- 4 oz. red wine

### Snack

- ½ cup light vanilla ice cream with ½ sliced banana

## ► SET REALISTIC GOALS

It might seem like you gained weight overnight, but for most people it actually has been years of gradual weight gain. Taking it off properly requires a moderate approach. Part of that might mean changing those mindless eating habits. You can make a permanent improvement, for example, by cutting out that habit of eating a snack after work every day, says Wyatt. "Dietitians recommend behavioral changes because so much of eating is a psychological thing," she says.

Losing 20 pounds doesn't happen overnight for anyone, but if you need to shed only 20 pounds, it will take you longer to lose that weight than it would a person who needs to drop 60 or 70 pounds, Bianchi explains. That's because a heavier person is often taking in many more calories than he or she needs to, whereas a person who's 20 pounds overweight cannot safely or wisely cut calories as drastically.

And yes, ladies, you're not imagining it. It really is easier for men to lose weight than it is for women. "For females, a weight loss of one to two pounds a week is realistic and achievable," says Christiana Care registered dietitian Danielle Jerome. "For males it's a bit higher, usually around two to three pounds per week."

## SKIP THE FAD DIETS

Or any thought of "dieting" for that matter. Losing weight and keeping it off means making permanent lifestyle changes. It requires making healthy choices day after day: lean protein, vegetables, small amounts of fruits, whole grains and healthier fats—and all in moderation.

"You want to provide the body with everything that it needs to be healthy so you can feel the absolute best you can," Marlow says. If you're serious about weight loss you need to learn to read food labels, to make wise choices when grocery shopping, to pay attention to portion sizes."

"We recommend therapeutic lifestyle changes—small goals and behavioral changes that can be maintained over the long run," Wyatt says.

## COUNT CALORIES

Experts say there's no way of getting around it. "There have been studies on all different types of diets that work, and the one common denominator is a lower calorie count," Bianchi says. "It's the only sustainable option."

But there is also such a thing as eating too few calories, which will thwart your weight-loss

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*Meal plan provided by Gabrielle Snyder Marlow, registered dietitian, program manager of nutrition services for Christiana Care Health System's Department of Family & Community Medicine.*

## LOSE 20 POUNDS THIS YEAR!

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efforts by causing your body to go into starvation mode to conserve calories. The number of calories you need to eat varies depending on your size and your activity level, which is another good reason to consult a weight-loss expert.

As a general guide, a woman who is moderately active can lose weight safely by cutting back to 1,500 calories a day, says Marlow. A moderately active man can safely lose weight on 1,800 calories daily.

Counting calories means counting every calorie, Bianchi says. There are no free passes, even on fruits and vegetables. "I had one patient who came to me and said, 'I'm turning into a rabbit—all I eat is salad. So how come I'm not losing the weight?'" Bianchi says. "It turns out he was putting a lot of olive oil on his salads, but he wasn't keeping track of those calories because he thought they didn't count 'because olive oil is good for you.'"

But also pay attention to carbs, proteins and fats. It's not enough to count calories. You also need to pay attention to the types of foods you are eating.

Alarcon starts most of his patients on a low-carbohydrate diet because many people

eat far too many carbs and not enough lean protein. When you aren't eating the proper foods—and what that means varies from person to person, Alarcon says—you set yourself up for deficiencies that create cravings that lead to overeating.

You need to eat the right foods but also in the right quantities and with the right frequency to keep a healthy metabolism. For most people, Alarcon says, that means spreading your allotted number of calories out over three meals and two snacks.

### KEEP A FOOD DIARY

"One of the No. 1 tools for weight loss is keeping some sort of daily record. Nothing increases awareness like a food diary," Marlow says. Keeping track will help you to allocate your food intake throughout the day and will help to identify where you are spending too many calories for too little nutritional reward.

The idea is to start looking at food in a different way—to think about all the tasty, good-for-you foods that you can choose to eat.

You can keep a food diary the old-fashioned way, with a notebook and pen and an accompanying booklet listing calories, fats, carbs and so on, or you can use one of the apps available for smart phones and iPads. Bianchi likes the app MyFitnessPal, but there are many others.

### GET MOVING

Experts say that physical activity has to be a major part of your daily life if you want to control your weight. Going to the gym is great, but physical activity can also be a walk around the block or working in your garden. The idea, as with food intake, is to set realistic goals for lifestyle changes, then to build on those.

If you're not physically active, check with your doctor before starting a new exercise plan. Then start by walking for five minutes several times a day, with a goal of working your way up to 150 minutes of cardio activity a week, in addition to strength-training and stretching, Tran says.

That 150 minutes a week is a minimum, Alarcon adds. Ninety percent of people who have lost weight and kept it off report exercising an average of 60 minutes a day, according to the National Weight Control Registry.

And make this your new lifestyle. Remember how we said this isn't a diet? That means there is no end date. You are not going to eat more healthfully for four months, then go back to your old ways. This is a life of eating right and in moderation, of exercising regularly and keeping an eye on your daily food intake and the numbers on the scale. It's a new lifestyle that will reward you for many years to come with better physical, mental and emotional health. **3/12**



Thank you to our survivors, sponsors and participants for joining us in the fight against breast cancer. Your support is crucial and donations may be made at [strideswilmington.org](http://strideswilmington.org) or call (302) 324-4227.

