

## Keep it up fact sheet

Your decision to eat well and be active may not necessarily mean losing weight or looking slimmer. It's about creating a happier and healthier lifestyle. Your body may not be in 'perfect' shape - but very few of us are! So appreciate your body for what it does for you - the more you improve your health, the more you get out of life.

### If you slip-up, keep going!

You might slip up occasionally, but don't be hard on yourself. It's not a reason to give up, just get back on track again as soon as you can. It's the improvements in your overall eating habits and activity level that can make a big difference.

- Try and identify the causes of your slip-ups (or negative triggers, see below) so you can be aware of them and hopefully avoid the situation next time.
- If you can, increase your physical activity to help balance any extra fuel you may have consumed as food and drink.
- Don't make it an excuse to give up - you haven't blown it, be positive and keep going!
- View your slip-up as the chance to understand more about your behaviour change.
- Remind yourself of all the wonderful reasons you're choosing to get more out of life!

### Dealing with negative triggers

There are many things that can trigger a slip-up in your steps towards creating a healthier, happier lifestyle. Here are a few of the common triggers and ways to help you deal with them.

#### Places or situations associated with eating or inactivity

- Have special areas designated for eating (e.g. dining table or breakfast bar only) and don't eat anywhere else in the home.
- When eating, focus on the meal and enjoy it, don't be distracted by reading or the TV.
- Take your sportswear (e.g. runners) wherever you go, even on holidays.
- Spend less time watching TV and more time being active.
- Do stretches or exercises while you're watching TV.
- Savour every bite you take to get more enjoyment from your food.

#### The sight and smell of food

- Keep food in the kitchen only.
- Store any problem food out of sight (at the back of the cupboard, in the freezer).
- Have healthy foods on hand for when you want a snack (e.g. fruit pieces, carrot sticks, low fat yoghurt, popcorn without butter).
- Avoid shopping when you're hungry.

#### Temptation from advertising

- Know your weaknesses - don't let clever marketing exploit you!
- Don't fall for quick-fix remedies that promise much but deliver little; know that changing eating and activity habits is the only way to a healthier lifestyle.
- Learn about food labels so you know what's really in products.
- Avoid buying foods you're likely to overeat - it's easier to say 'no' once to buying a food than to say 'no' 20 times when it's in your fridge!

- Some advertisers specifically target children. Don't fall for the 'pester-power' - it's OK to say 'no' to your kids. Help them learn about healthy eating and physical activity too.

### **Feeling peckish**

- If you feel like eating, ask yourself if you're really hungry, listen to your body.
- When you feel most tempted to eat, do something to distract yourself (ideally something physical).
- If you must eat at a certain time, make sure you sit down and have a proper meal or healthy snack.

### **Other people**

- Let your friends and family know you're making healthy lifestyle changes that are important to you and ask them for their support to help you make those changes.
- When someone offers you food that's inappropriate for you, refuse the offer and mean it - 'no thank you' should do the trick! Be consistent: if you say 'no' sometimes and 'yes' at other times, people will keep persisting to tempt you.
- When you're going to a party or barbeque, take a plate of tasty yet healthy food with you (such as low fat dips, fruit kebabs, gourmet sandwiches).
- Make the most of time spent catching up with friends in an active way. For example, instead of meeting for a coffee and cake, go for a walk together, have a game of golf or start a sporting team together.
- Deal with uncooperative people politely and firmly: 'As a good friend, I'm sure you understand that chocolates are my greatest weakness, you'd be a big help by not offering them to me in the future, thanks!'

### **Negative thoughts and feelings**

- Replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts. For example, replace 'I have never been good at sport, so why bother exercising' with 'I don't have to compete with anyone, so I can enjoy being physically active'.
- Make a conscious effort to be more positive: praise yourself and concentrate on your successes.
- When you do slip up, don't dwell on it. Remember, you've spent a long time developing unhealthy habits, it's going to take a while to change them and put new behaviours in place.

### **Aim for a healthy lifestyle focus**

A healthy lifestyle takes into account your physical, mental and social wellbeing:

- Make positive choices and take control of your health.
- Create a sense of wellbeing through thinking, feeling and doing.
- Look at all areas of your wellbeing, don't just focus on your weight.
- Feel good about yourself, enjoy nutritious food, be active and get the most out of life!

### **Go further**

Doing some extra physical activity or organised sport regularly has so many benefits, such as reducing your risk of illnesses like type 2 diabetes or heart disease, improving your feeling of wellbeing and your level of fitness. Following are some hints to help get you started.

- Enjoyment - choose an activity that's right for you and make sure it's something you enjoy, or go for something different you've always wanted to try.
- Choose a time that's right for you - make it a time that you can stick to regularly.
- Company - choose a team sport or find a buddy to share your activity with. It's much easier to keep it up if you're motivating each other!
- Set a goal and work towards it - make it a realistic, short-term goal and reward yourself when you get there.

### **The keys to success**

Starting or re-starting a physical activity program can be difficult and it may take you a few weeks to get really comfortable with it. You may feel some initial discomfort - but some careful planning can help reduce this. Take some precautions:

- Avoid getting sore feet - wear supportive footwear.
- Use some petroleum jelly to avoid chaffing of the inner thighs.
- If you experience shortness of breath, slow down a little. Don't over-do it too soon.

Some people may feel great from their physical activity straight away. For others, it may take some time. Once you're into a routine, you'll find it becomes easier and you won't want to miss it! The feel-good factor you get from the physical activity will help provide you with the internal motivation to keep going.