

Reclaiming Our Health in North America

Brought to you by the NA Health & Wellbeing Team



Workgroup Wellness Moments Weight Management

*Let us help you with a “wellness” moment as a perfect way to start your meetings. To help get the dialogue flowing, choose one of the following six scripted sub-topics on **weight management**. Share all or parts in your work-group meetings.*

1. Healthy Eating Across the Lifespan

All food and beverage choices matter. The overall nutritional value of a person’s diet across the lifespan is more than the “sum of its parts”. The main components of a healthy eating pattern include:

- Variety of veggies; dark green, red and orange – beans, peas and starchy
- Fruit and Grains
- Fat free or low fat dairy and/or soy fortified products
- Variety of foods rich in protein
- Limited amounts of saturated and trans fats and added sugars

The dietary guidelines focus on three types of healthy eating patterns:

- **Healthy U.S. Style:** based on types and proportions of foods Americans typically consume but in nutrient dense forms
- **Healthy Mediterranean Style:** contains more fruits and seafood and less dairy, meats and poultry.
- **Healthy Vegetarian Style:** amounts of soy products, legumes, nuts, seeds and whole grains are increased and meat, poultry and seafood are eliminated.
- [Life Stages | MyPlate](#): A robust healthy eating tool
- [Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025](#) is a downloadable tool to learn more about eating across the lifespan.
- [Canada’s Food Guide](#) created a “protein foods” group as plant-based foods – meaning foods without meat or dairy – are getting more attention.

2. Improve Your Health With Practice

The goal of exercising and eating better is to improve and become healthier over time. Emphasizing practice and skills as process goals is an effective way to achieve fitness results without always chasing muscle soreness and exhaustion. Using a similar mindset shift in nutrition can help avoid cycles of restrictive dieting by helping you learn to make food choices and eat in a manner that is enjoyable, keeps you satiated, and healthy.

Use these [4 tips](#) to focus on progress, not perfection.

- [How meal prep can help you eat healthier](#): From being less reliant on processed food to knowing what exactly is going into every meal, there are many health benefits of meal prep.

- [10 Things to Consider If You Are Struggling to Lose Weight](#)
- [MyPlate Tools](#): Use these fun tools to test your knowledge, build nutrition skills, and make a healthy eating plan for you and your family.

3. Let's Be Real, We All Snack

Let's be real, we all snack. And actually, snacking isn't "bad" for you if you do it in moderation and make healthy choices. As boring as "healthy snacks" might sound, you'd be surprised at just how tasty they are, all the new things you'll get to try, and how easy they are to tote around with you on the go. Seriously, they fit in your laptop bag, purse, and workout bag or backpack just as easily as the prepackaged stuff!

So, let's toss the excuses aside and run through some of [the healthy, nutritious items](#) that you should be adding to the top of your grocery list.

- [Healthy Snacking with MyPlate](#)
- [What to eat after a workout](#): It's important to eat the right foods after a workout to help your body recover.
- [Help your preschooler eat well](#), be active, and grow up healthy! Young children look to you as they learn, develop and grow healthy eating habits. Make every bite count.
- [Healthy Eating for Kids](#): School lunches and snacks

4. Nutrition and Our Mental Health

Is there a connection? Does what we eat and our relationship with food really matter? The evidence is somewhat limited as to which specific foods actually help with mood but there is mounting evidence that healthy eating along with other treatments can help manage mood disorders. [Some foods are especially useful for happier brains](#).

Will practicing grace, self-compassion and [sneaking self-care](#) into your daily life move us to healthier behaviors? Yes! This is our super-power when it comes to lifestyle changes contributing to sustainable weight loss.

- [Common Psychological Blocks](#) – five of the most common emotional issues that come into play on weight loss journeys.
- [All About Hunger](#) - hunger is the body's signal indicating the biological need for food, but most of us often eat for reasons that reflect *other* forms of hunger.

5. Hydration Myth Busters

Water plays a vital role in supporting healthy weight loss. Unlike fat, our bodies can't store water, so it's necessary to replenish continuously throughout the day. In addition to staying hydrated, water helps speed up metabolism, facilitates the removal of toxins, and prevents overeating.

Consider some of these tips when trying to stay hydrated to reach a healthy weight:

- **Drink the right amount of water** – certain health conditions and lifestyles can determine how much water you need, consult your healthcare provider.
- **Purchase a reusable water bottle** – your water bottle becomes your visual cue to drink more.
- **Drink water with every meal** – it helps to improve your body's digestion.
- **Eat your vegetables** – your food choices are a significant contributor to hydration and account for roughly 20 percent of your daily fluid intake.
- **Track your water intake** – this will help you so you don't fall behind. Aim to consume around 64 ounces of water daily.

- [The benefits of drinking water](#): Did you know? Dehydration can affect our ability to make decisions, as well as our emotions.
- [Stay Hydrated – Staying Healthy](#): Keeping the body hydrated helps the heart more easily pump blood through the blood vessels to the muscles. And, it helps the muscles work efficiently.

6. Reframing Weight Loss

Energy balance is dynamic. There are many factors that influence the way the human body reacts to the foods we eat and the physical activity we perform. Weight loss is non-linear and a long-term process. We do not respond to exercise and weight loss in textbook fashion. Do you daily eat the perfect balance of nutrients and stay within your calorie limits? Do you daily complete all of your cardio, strength and flexibility exercises? We don't either! Forgive the slip-ups and focus on long-term objectives.

You are having “realistic success” and close to your true or ideal weight if you are able to say “Yes” to the following statements.

1. I can do what I want from a physical activity and movement standpoint.
2. My weight and body composition does not increase my health risk.
3. I can maintain my weight without doing things that feel “unnatural” or too extreme.

If one or more answers is “No” and you feel the struggle, which just means you haven't given up. Remember...it's “progress over perfection”.

- [What to eat after a workout](#): What is it that you should be reaching for after a workout to help your body recover?
- [Get a baseline for the calories you burn through exercise](#): No need to be overwhelmed with numbers. Run your activity through the formula and focus on the goals of staying active and eating healthy and you should notice some weight loss.