

Modifiable factors that can help you better manage your weight



You have already learned that there are factors you cannot control that may be impacting your weight, namely, your genetics, your hormone levels, your metabolism and the environment we live in.

However, did you know that there are factors **you can manage** that may be impacting your weight? Addressing these modifiable factors may help with your weight loss journey and keeping the weight off.

Sleep hygiene and fatigue

Did you know that your sleep habits impact your weight? When you do not get enough sleep, the hormones in your brain change, leading to an **increase in the underlying drive** to eat. The result is increased wanting and decreased restraint which can lead to food consumption beyond need.

In addition, when you don't get a full night's sleep, your metabolism slows down and your body stores more calories.

How to improve sleep hygiene and fatigue



1. For the average person, getting **more than 7 hours** of sleep each night "resets" some hormones that help regulate appetite



2. Talk to your doctor about ways to improve the **quality** of your sleep. This may include:

- Ensuring absolute darkness
- Cool temperature (18.5–20.5°C)
- No pets in the bed
- Shutting down all screens
- Finishing your last coffee before 2 p.m.

Eating patterns

Many people who struggle with their weight are more sensitive to food cues in the environment and have a greater drive to eat. This can lead to food consumption beyond need.

Approaches that may help you achieve your best weight



1. Identifying and developing strategies to manage your "high-risk time" of the day



2. Eating smaller, more frequent, *balanced* meals



3. Choosing water as your main drink



4. Cooking your meals more often, rather than eating out

WHAT IMPACT DOES SMALLER, MORE FREQUENT MEALS HAVE? Going too long without eating causes your body to increase the release of hunger hormones. This leads to increased wanting, and more interest in seeking out and eating food.

Sedentary lifestyle

Physical activity has a positive impact on your weight by reducing your drive to seek out and eat food. When you are sedentary, you are more vulnerable to food cues in the environment.

Examples of simple ways to be less sedentary in your daily life



Talk a brisk 30-minute walk



Take the stairs



Stand up at least every 20 minutes when sitting at your computer, or during commercial breaks while watching TV



Walk or bike to work if possible, if not, park your car further from the entrance of your workplace

There are many ways to be less sedentary—by choosing physical activity that you truly enjoy, you can make these changes more sustainable!

Stress

Have you ever found that when you feel stressed, you eat more processed, less healthy food? This is called stress-induced eating. When you are stressed, you become **more vulnerable to food cues** in your environment, which may also cause you to **choose foods that are high in sugar and fat**.

The overall effect is increased wanting and decreased restraint leading to food consumption beyond need. In cases of chronic stress, this effect may have an even greater impact on eating behaviour.

Steps to decrease stress in your life

1. At the end of each day, reflect on if you experienced stress
2. If you did experience stress, what caused it? How did it impact you?
3. Think, is there any way that you can reduce this stressor?
4. Remember to take it day-by-day, just because one day was stressful does not mean the next will be

Consider keeping track of **how you feel** before, during and after you eat. This may help you identify stressors and reflect on how you respond to stress.

Another modifiable factor that may be impacting your weight is the medications you take. Talk to your doctor about which medications may be working against your ability to lose weight.