

### **Small Dietary Changes Can Make a Big Difference**

Losing weight does not have to mean making big changes in your diet. In fact, making some simple lifestyle changes can lead to big changes over time.

Simply eating 100 fewer calories per day for a year can result in a 10 pound weight loss. Too often, people feel they need to make drastic changes in their diet in order to lose weight. They'll try some restrictive diets or diets that allow only certain foods.

Most of the time these individuals are looking for quick weight loss, but nutritionists usually recommend gradual weight loss at no more than a half to two pounds per week. Overweight children and adults should begin a weight loss program under the direction of a healthcare provider.

It is difficult to get adequate nutrition when consuming less than 1,200 calories per day. That is why it is vital to work with a physician or registered dietician to attain a healthy weight.

- To cut calories but still maintain all of the nutrients, drink three glasses of 1 percent or skim milk rather than three glasses of whole milk per day. The USDA MyPyramid recommends three cups of dairy per day.
- Substitute low-fat or fat-free mayonnaise for regular mayonnaise. An even better idea to cut calories would be to use mustard in place of mayonnaise.
- When you're thirsty, it's easy to stop at the store and pick up a 20-ounce bottle of your favorite soft drink. Try downsizing to a 12-ounce bottle in order to cut calories and sugar intake. You might also want to try a diet beverage and save at least 150 calories. Water with a slice of lemon or lime always is a good choice, too.

Be sure to check portion sizes on packaging. It can be easy to eat two or three servings of cereal or snack foods without realizing it. Pour out the amount you normally eat, measure it, and then compare that measurement to the serving size listed on the package. For those who pour out too much, try switching to a smaller bowl to help keep portions under control.

Another food that leads to easy consumption of extra calories is a baked potato. Just with adding two tablespoons of butter the calories can add up fast. That extra butter can contain up to 200 extra calories. By switching to sour cream, you can have just as much for a mere 50 calories. For even fewer calories, substitute light or fat-free sour cream or plain, non-fat yogurt.

Keep a close eye on serving sizes of the various foods you consume in an effort to keep calorie consumption under control.

Just making minimal changes to your diet that you can live with will help you see those extra pounds start to disappear. The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, or status as a veteran and is an equal opportunity employer. Information given herein is for educational purposes only. References made to commercial products or trade names are with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement is implied. Oklahoma State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, State and Local Governments Cooperating.