



Diabetes Life Lines

Write It Down to Lose It – Weight That Is!

What is self-monitoring?

Self-monitoring is when you write down what you eat and how much exercise you do. Self-monitoring helps you be more aware of your behaviors and see where you might need to make changes to improve your health. For example, if you write what you eat down for a week, you may notice that you often overeat at lunch on days you skip breakfast.

Benefits of self-monitoring

Over and over, research shows that people who self-monitor lose more weight and are more likely to keep it off than those who do not.^{1,2,3} In fact, a study found that people who use self-monitoring strategies lose almost twice as much weight as those who do not.⁴

Self-monitoring can help show you how healthy the food you are eating is. It can show you things that you need to change such as eating smaller portion sizes, drinking less sweet tea, or eating more fruits and vegetables.

Another important benefit of self-monitoring is that it helps hold you accountable. Because you can see what you write down, it makes you think about your choices more. It is easy to forget those pieces of candy you picked up when you passed the jar on your friend's desk at work. If you write them down, you might notice you eat an extra 200 calories worth of candy each day. You might think you are pretty active

each day, but if you use an app to track your activity, you might notice that you only get about half of the recommended 10,000 steps per day.

How can I self-monitor?

You can write everything you eat or drink down with paper or pencil or use an app. When recording what you eat by hand, you must be sure to include details such as portion sizes, condiments, seasonings, drinks, oils, etc. to make sure you can add up the correct amount of calories you take in. To calculate calories, use nutrition facts labels or websites of food companies or restaurants. When recording physical activity by hand, it is important to record what kind of activity you were involved in and for how long. Apps are very useful because they will do the math for you.

Most apps have lots of foods to choose from and even brand names and restaurants. They are right at your fingertips in your phone, so they are often very easy and convenient to use. Also, you can sync apps with fitness trackers like FITBIT® or Apple watches to help keep track of your physical activity, or record it in the app. Some commonly available free apps to use include :

- MYFITNESSPAL® (www.myfitnesspal.com)
- Lose It!® (www.loseit.com)
- SPARKPEOPLE® (<http://www.sparkpeople.com>).

It is possible to use an online version of the apps if you do not have a smart phone.

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Tips for self-monitoring

- Be as honest and as accurate as possible.
- Write it down as soon as possible so you don't forget.
- Choose a method that is easiest for you. If you are not as tech savvy, use pen and paper. If using an app is more convenient for you, then use that.

While self-monitoring can seem hard or like it takes a while, remember that it really helps. People who self-monitor make healthier choices and are more likely to reach their goals. Try it for a few weeks before giving up. You might be surprised just how much it pays off!

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Way 2 Go H₂O!

As summertime and warmer weather approaches, it becomes extra important to think about hydration (getting enough water and fluids)! But where do you begin? We are here to answer your questions.

Adequate hydration is necessary for our body to function properly.^{1,2} Being hydrated is also good for your heart! When you have enough water in you, it is easier for your heart to pump blood, meaning it does not have to work as hard.² On the other hand, dehydration can lead to lots of problems, some of which can be very serious. It can cause anything from a simple headache to heat stroke.³

Signs of Dehydration:

- Thirst
- Flushed Skin
- Unusual Fatigue
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Dark Urine

How does my diabetes affect my hydration?

Did you know that people with diabetes actually feel the heat more than those without?⁵ Diabetes can lead to complications that damage blood vessels. This damage keeps your body from cooling as well. Medications can also affect your hydration status. Many people with diabetes take medication that acts as diuretic, meaning it makes your body lose water more quickly.⁵

Being out in the heat changes the way your body uses insulin. This can result in abnormal blood sugar levels. When you are spending time outside, make sure you check your blood sugar frequently and treat as needed!⁵



When do I need to hydrate?

You should always drink fluids throughout the day to stay hydrated. However, it is especially important when you will be outside, if it is hot, or you are exercising. Plan ahead and begin drinking fluids beforehand. It is suggested to aim for 16-20 ounces one to two hours before going outside or exercising. Continue to drink while you are active. Taking small sips can help avoid any stomach upset. Once you are done, drink another 16-24 ounces.² Remember: if you feel thirsty, you are already at least a little dehydrated!⁴

What should I drink? And how much?

Of course, water is always the best choice. Alcohol and caffeinated drinks are not the best choices when you are trying to hydrate. These can pull water from your body and further dehydrate you. Sugary drinks such as sports drinks, sodas, sweet tea, punch, and even 100% fruit juice can upset your stomach if you drink them during exercise or when you are out in the heat.² They can also cause big spikes in blood sugar. Be very careful if you choose to drink these. If you are tired of water, it is okay to have something else sometimes! Just look for low-calorie options to keep your blood sugar normal. Try infusing your water. This is where you soak fruit and/or herbs in water to give it some added flavor. Sparkling water is another great option. Many brands have flavored versions with little to no calories. Unsweet teas

can be refreshing and contain no sugar. Just be careful of the caffeine. If you have been sweating a lot, a zero-calorie sports drink can help you replenish electrolytes without all the sugar of the normal version.

The amount of water a person needs varies on many factors. Climate, clothing, activity, how much you sweat, medical conditions, and medications are just a few examples of things that can affect the amount of water you should be drinking each day.^{1,2,3,5} However, for most people 64 ounces to 78 ounces a day is about right.²



References

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Infused Water Combos to Try:

- Watermelon Mint
- Strawberry Basil
- Lemon Rosemary
- Orange Blueberry
- Cucumber Melon



Setting SMART Goals to Improve Health Behaviors

Many of us have big goals to lose weight, eat healthier, or be more physically active. Making changes in our habits and behaviors is not easy, though. Where do we start? To help you achieve your big goal, taking these three steps can increase your chances of successfully meeting your goal and maintaining the changes you make in your behavior:

1. **Set realistic short-term goals.** We call these “SMART” goals. We’ll talk about what that means below!
2. **Make a practical plan to reach those goals.**
3. **Track your progress.**

Let’s talk more about each of these!

Set realistic short-term goals.

Having a big goal, like wanting to lose 20 pounds, is important. But big goals don’t tell you how to reach them! Research shows it is important to set short-term goals that will eventually lead you to your big, long-term goal. Short-term goals are smaller goals that will help you achieve your big, long-term goal. Your big goal may be something you want to reach in the next 3 months, 6 months, or 1 year. Short-term goals are something you want to reach much sooner, typically in the next 1-2 weeks. Your long-term goal might be to lose 10 pounds in 3 months. An example of a short-term goal is, “Three days this week, I will go on a 30-minute walk during my lunch break.” It is important that these short-term goals are something you can actually achieve. You can set realistic short-term goals by using the “SMART” guideline! SMART goals are:

- S** – Specific – They focus on changing only one, specific behavior at a time.
- M** – Measurable – They include numbers! For example, you will walk for 30 minutes 3 days this week.
- A** – Achievable – They are something you can actually do in the time frame you have to work on them.
- R** – Relevant – They are important to you personally.
- T** – Timely – They include a “deadline” for when you will achieve the goal, such as the end of the week!



Make a practical plan to reach those goals.

Once you have a SMART goal, it’s time to make a plan to help you reach that goal! Be sure to include the “*where, when, and how long*” of how you will reach your goal. For example, if your goal is to go on a 30-minute walk, 3 days this week during your lunch break, *where* will you walk?

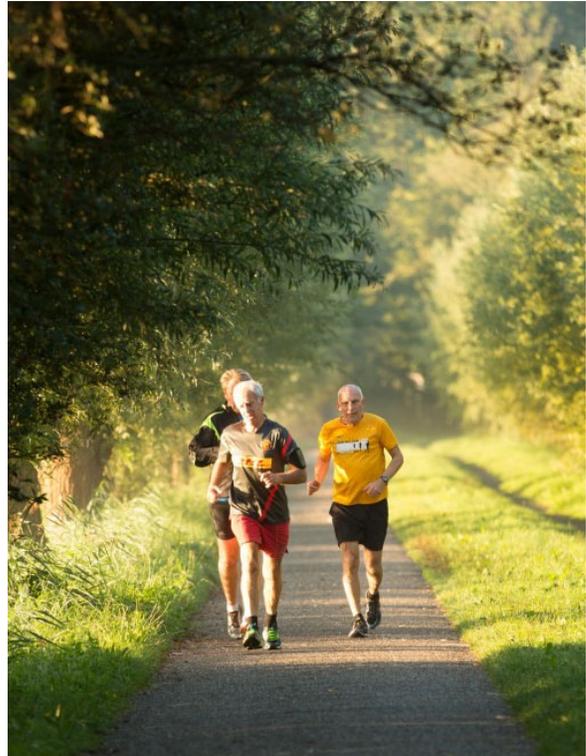
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When will you walk, *what days* and *what time* during your lunch break (beginning, middle, or end)? And *how long* will you walk? Will you walk two 15-minute bouts or all 30 minutes at one time? Other things to consider including in your plan are potential challenges you may face and how to overcome those challenges. For example, a potential challenge to walking during your lunch break would be bad weather if you are planning to walk outside. Have a plan for this challenge by finding an indoor place to walk when the weather is bad.

Track your progress.

Lastly, track your progress to make sure you can reach your goal by your “deadline.” Technology, such as apps or websites, makes tracking physical activity and what you eat much easier these days. You can also use one of the many paper physical activity and food logs available online, or you can simply write down your physical activity and food intake in a notebook or calendar! Choose what works best for you!



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Tomato and Cucumber Salad

(Adapted from www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov)

Serving size: ¾ cup

Yield: 12 servings per recipe

Ingredients

Salad:

- 4 large tomatoes, cubed
- 1 large cucumber, cubed
- 1 cup red onion, chopped
- 1 cup green bell pepper, chopped
- 1/3 cup parsley, chopped

Dressing:

- 1/3 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon sugar



Directions

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine the salad ingredients.
2. In a small mixing bowl, combine the dressing ingredients. Mix well.
3. Pour the dressing over the salad. Mix well.
4. Refrigerate for 1 hour before serving.

Nutrition Facts per Serving

Calories: 35

Carbohydrate: 5 grams

Total fat: 1 gram

Protein: 1 gram

Sodium: 103 milligrams

Fiber: 1 gram



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Dear Friend,

Diabetes Life Lines is a bi-monthly publication sent to you by your local county Extension agent.

It is written by an Extension Nutrition and Health Specialist and other health professionals from the University of Georgia. This newsletter brings you the latest information on diabetes self-management, healthy recipes and news about important diabetes-related events.

If you would like more information, please contact your local county Extension Office.

Yours truly,

County Extension Agent

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