

LOSING WEIGHT

Weight loss can be difficult but here are some tips to help. If you are really struggling to lose weight despite trying these then please talk to one of our GPs.

1) Reducing intake of foods that can increase weight

Reducing excess sugar and limiting carbohydrates can help you lose weight and feel better.

Try to cut out sugary foods and drinks or sugar added to cereals and hot drinks. This also includes some alcohol as alcoholic drinks can contain a lot of sugar.

Also cutting down on carbohydrates (such as pasta, bread, rice, and potatoes) will help as they are broken down into sugar molecules in your body. This is an excellent resource to help you do this - <https://lowcarbfreshwell.co.uk/>

There are also ways and times of eating sugar and carbohydrates which can reduce the inflammation and insulin spikes associated with them. The Glucose Goddess suggests “hacks” that will help reduce the negative impact of sugar on your body. In turn this can reverse Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus and pre-diabetes and reduce oxidative stress and inflammation. It will also give you more energy, better sleep and help you lose weight. The Glucose Goddess’s website has excellent resources <https://www.glucosegoddess.com/> which explains the science behind this and how to do the hacks.

2) Burning off fat with exercise

Please increase your physical exercise to help burn off sugar and any excess weight. Fatty tissue reduces the effectiveness of insulin in the body to process sugar and therefore it is stored as fat in the body.

Recommendations are for muscle strengthening exercises twice a week. This could be doing some press ups and squats weekly and also working out with some small weights or resistance bands. Regular cardiovascular exercise will also help.

150 minutes of cardiovascular exercise a week is recommended to keep healthy. This could be 5 x 30 minute brisk walks a week. Please build up slowly to these. Any activity - dancing, cycling, rowing or even just being a bit more active in the garden which is above your normal range will help. It will also give you lots of other health benefits such as improved general strength, well-being, lower blood pressure, reduced cholesterol, reduced stress and improved mental well-being.

Free services that can help with increasing physical activity.

<https://www.essexwellbeingsservice.co.uk/services/physical-activity>

3) Controlling portion sizes

Eating too much can be a common cause for weight gain. Portion sizes have increased over the years and we eat larger meals than our ancestors plus are less active.

Here are some tips to try:

1. Drink water before your meal so you feel a bit full before you eat.
2. Eat a plate of vegetables first before eating the rest of your main meal. This will fill you up with more nutritious food first before anything like carbohydrates.
3. Use a smaller plate so visually it looks like you are eating a good amount as a standard-sized portion will look small on a larger plate, making you feel dissatisfied. Use a smaller plate to prevent overloading.
4. Don't double your carbohydrates. If you are already having one carbohydrate like pasta then don't have another carbohydrate like bread.
5. Try measuring cups or even a coffee mug to measure out portions such as vegetables, pasta or rice so you don't overcook too much and feel you need to eat it.
6. Don't rush to have seconds, drink some water, have a break from eating for 20 minutes and see if you still need something after that. If you do eat some fruit instead.
7. Don't pick at leftovers – avoid the temptation to pick at any leftover food from yours or anyone else's plates such as your children's. If this is happening regularly, try cooking less food.
8. Ask for less or share a meal when out at a restaurant if the restaurant tends to serve supersized portions.

4) Try Intermittent Fasting (IF)

Intermittent fasting means that you don't eat for a period of time each day or week. Intermittent fasting is not for everyone but can be a really effective way of losing and keeping off weight as well as increasing energy levels and improving what foods you do eat.

The approach we have found most easy to adopt and to sustain is daily intermittent fasting. It works by not eating for a greater period of time in the day than eating. So for example, not eating anything or drinking anything other than water or black tea/coffee from the time your eating window closes to when it opens again.

A popular time period is 16 hours of not eating and 8 hours of time to eat. This might be skipping breakfast and then starting your eating window at 12pm for lunch and then closing it after dinner at 8pm. Alternatively, having breakfast and lunch but closing your eating window from afternoon 4pm

to 8am. What times work for you will all depend on your lifestyle, work and family life. It can take a little while to get used to but once you do it is very easy to maintain.

Not only can IF help reduce weight but it also has many health benefits. By having a narrow window for eating it helps you become more focussed on what you do eat during this period. It also allows the body to focus on other important activities such as cell repair as it is not diverting energy to constantly digest food. It can help reduce inflammation, diabetes and cholesterol and therefore the risk of conditions such as:

- Alzheimer's disease
- Arthritis
- Asthma
- Multiple sclerosis
- Stroke

It's important to note that intermittent fasting can have unpleasant side effects, but they usually go away within a month. Side effects may include:

- Hunger
- Fatigue
- Insomnia
- Nausea
- Headaches

Intermittent fasting is safe for many people, but it's not for everyone. Skipping meals may not be the best way to manage your weight if you're pregnant or breast-feeding. If you have medical problems such as kidney stones, gastroesophageal reflux or diabetes talk with one of our GPs before starting intermittent fasting

There are many apps that can help you kick start your IF journey. Simple is an effective app that we have good experience with but lots of other apps exist.

Free services that can help with weight loss.

<https://www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk/services/weight-management>