

SMART about Weight Management

SMART about Added Sugar/ Refined Carbohydrates

S- Smart about weight management

- If you take in more calories than you burn, your weight will increase. The opposite is also true. If you take in fewer calories than you burn, you may lose weight. Here is the energy equation:

$$\text{Calories (energy in)} - \text{Calories (energy out)} = \text{Your Weight}$$

Calories, or energy that comes from the food that you eat. Calories out is influenced by your age, your gender, genetics, and the exercise that you include.

- Tracking your intake will provide you with an understanding of what you are eating. Tracking your intake may also serve to be a platform for identifying changes that you may need to make. There are many ways to track your intake. Try using an app such as Lose It, My Fitness Pal or Rate Your Plate (by the CDC). You may prefer to use our MGH Cardiac Rehab log or to keep your own written log. Tracking your intake can heighten your awareness and make you accountable for your food choices.

M- Be Mindful of your intake of refined carbohydrates and added sugar

- Excess intake of added sugar and refined carbohydrates will promote weight gain and increase risk of chronic disease.
- Read labels to check for added sugar. Sugar, honey, molasses, cane syrup, corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup, maple syrup, and juice, are all words that let you know the manufacturer has added sugar to the product.

A-Allow- Since the goal is to have a lifestyle vs a “diet”, *allow* for a small discretionary allowance of added sugar

- While it is best to not to include added sugar, it is best to be realistic as you create sustainable goals. On average, limit your intake of added sugar to no more than 6 teaspoons a day for a woman (24 grams/day) and no more than 9 teaspoons a day (36 grams/day) for a man.

R-Realistic Goals.

- If you have been including foods that have their fiber removed (white bread, white pasta, white rice, candy, cookies, regular soda, juice), it may take some time to limit or minimize your intake of added sugar and refined carbohydrates as these foods tend to be addictive. The more you include them, the more of them you will want to include. Your desire or craving to include these foods will diminish, the less that you include them, and the better you feel.
- Set a short-term goal. The goal should be clear, specific, measurable, realistic and attainable. For example, your goal may be that you will include 3 fruit servings every day for the next 3 weeks.
- Track your progress as you keep a record as to whether you include 3 fruit servings each day (or whatever goal you have identified).
- Upon achieving your goal, have a non-food item with which you can reward yourself. This may be a book that you have wanted to read, or a movie that you want to see. It may also be a place that you have wanted to visit- whatever would be a treat for you. This is about treating yourself nicely.
- When you achieve your goal, set a new goal. This will help you to stay focused and engaged as you continue to establish healthy eating habits.

T- Time

- It often will take approximately a week or two to rid yourself of the cravings for foods that have sugar added and/or refined carbohydrates (foods that have their roughage or fiber removed). These cravings will go away. You may be surprised that the appeal for these foods will be limited or may even go away. This means that if you find yourself sitting in front of a food that is high in sugar, for example, that you will no longer be tempted by a desire to eat this food. Instead, you may find yourself in complete control and comforted by your desire and confidence to reach your dietary goals.