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## Balancing energy in and energy out

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### Summary

- If we regularly eat more kilojoules than our body needs, the excess will be stored as body fat.
  - Achieving or maintaining a healthy weight is all about balancing energy we take in and energy we burn.
  - A single energy-dense meal may contain most of an adult's daily kilojoule intake and drinks can be high in kilojoules too. So, when eating out, look for kilojoule labelling on menus and check before you choose.
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### How to be a healthy weight – balancing energy in and energy out

Achieving or maintaining a healthy weight is all about balancing the energy we take in with the energy we burn (energy out).

Tips for watching the energy you take in:

- enjoy a variety of foods from each of the five food groups in the amounts recommended
- watch your portion sizes – particularly foods and drinks that are high in kilojoules
- limit your intake of energy-dense or high-kilojoule foods and drinks (check the kilojoules on the menu when eating out)
- if you do have an energy-dense meal, choose food or drinks that have fewer kilojoules at other meals in the day.

Tips for watching the energy you burn:

- be active in as many ways as you can throughout the day – take the stairs instead of the lift, get off the bus a stop early and walk, break up sitting time at work
- exercise regularly – at least 30 minutes of moderately intense activity on most days
- do more activity when you eat more kilojoules.

Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight is good for your overall vitality and well-being and helps prevent many diseases.

### Energy in – eating too many kilojoules

When we regularly eat more kilojoules than our body needs, the spare energy is stored as fat.

Eating as little as 100kJ extra each day (or burning 100kJ less by exercise), can lead to one kilogram of body fat creeping on over a single year.

If you are above your healthy weight, to lose one kilogram (kg) of body fat in two months (without increasing your physical activity), you would need to eat around 600kJ less per day.

### Energy in – eating too few kilojoules

When we regularly eat fewer kilojoules than our body needs our weight may decrease.

If you experience weight loss that puts you outside of your **healthy weight range** or is unintentional, it is important to seek advice from your GP or Dietitian.

### Energy out – exercise to burn kilojoules

When you are active, your body burns more energy (kilojoules). Exercise not only uses up stored energy, but also helps to stimulate muscle development. The more muscle tissue you have, the more kilojoules you can burn.

Regular physical activity helps you manage your weight and maintain good health – it can even reduce your risk of

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chronic diseases.

To actively lose weight, aim to do 60 – 90 minutes moderate-intensity physical activity most days of the week. Start small and gradually work your way up. Remember, weight you lose gradually is more likely to stay off than weight you lose through crash diets.

**If you are over 40, have a pre-existing medical condition or you haven't exercised for some time, see your doctor before starting a new fitness program.**

### **Find out more about physical activity**

#### **Making practical changes to your energy balance**

Reducing the amount of kilojoules we eat and drink every day, or doing more exercise every day, even by small amounts, can all add up and make a difference.

This could be as easy as:

- having salad or rice as a side instead of hot chips
- ordering grilled instead of deep-fried or crumbed options
- swapping full fat for low fat or skim milk
- swapping a high sugar drink for water
- swapping a fried food for a low kJ one
- swapping a large food or drink serve for a smaller one
- avoiding meal deal or 'two for one' promotions
- checking the kilojoules on menus and choosing the lower kilojoule option
- having fewer kilojoules at other meals
- doing more activity when you eat more kilojoules.

#### **Where to get help**

- **Live Lighter**
- **Your GP**
- **Dietitians Association of Australia**
- **Nutrition Australia**
- **Eat for Health**
- **Heart Foundation – Healthy Eating**

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