Recovery Bites

Tips to help you lose weight

ALCOHOL AND DRUG RECOVERY SERVICE

What causes us to gain weight?



- Weight gain happens when we consume more calories than we need.
- Weight gain may be the result of changes to your diet, drinking habits or being less active.
- High alcohol intake can contribute to unwanted weight gain
- High sugar and high fat foods don't fill us up and can result in us eating more calories than we would if we ate a meal that was nutritious and filling.
- Sometimes we can gain weight without expecting it. This is often because we are not always aware of the food and drink choices that we make, especially when we "eat on the go."

Why might we gain weight when we are no longer using drugs and / or alcohol?

When we use drugs or alcohol, some people eat less. When we become abstinent and our lives become more structured, our natural appetite can return. This is a helpful stage in recovery and some weight restoration is a sign that your body is becoming better nourished.

However, some people seek the feelings that high sugar and high fat foods give us. Cravings for full sugar drinks, chocolate, crisps and take-a-ways are common when our appetite returns.

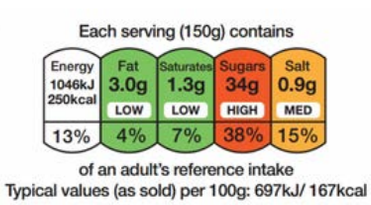


This can lead to excess weight gain and for some people, this can feel uncomfortable.

Diet tips



1. Have a regular meal pattern. This will help prevent hunger and snacking on higher sugar / higher fat foods.
2. Think about the "Eatwell Guide" and where the foods you are choosing fit into it. What could you be needing more or less of?
3. Add vegetables to each meal. They are lower in calories, provide fibre and will help fill you up.
4. If you feel hungry between meals, choose snacks such as cereal, toast, yogurt, fruit, crackers or oatcakes.
5. Look at the traffic light system on food labels and choose those with more "green" and less "red."
6. Try eating off a smaller plate.
7. Choose lower fat and lower sugar options.



Activity tips

1. Try to get some outside activity time each day.
2. Increase exercise by walking, getting off the bus sooner or using the stairs.
3. It can be helpful to track your step count on a smart phone / device and aim to increase it.
4. Some people may prefer more structured exercise. Think about what you might like to do and check what is available in your local area.
5. Reduce your sitting time.



Behavioural tips

1. Plan ahead "what am I going to eat tomorrow?"
2. Set goals. For example, to eat 3 meals per day or replace chocolate and crisps with fruit and cereal. Some people like to set weight loss goals (a weight loss of 1-2 pounds a week is a reasonable goal if overweight).
3. Be aware of when and where you eat. Are there some places and situations where you eat more healthily or less healthily?
4. Consider if you are hungry or if it is a craving? A craving will go away in time, hunger will persist.
5. Keep a food diary to help you see what you are having and to plan the next day.



Additional Resources



ADRS nutrition leaflets:

Contains all our nutrition leaflets specific to addiction.

www.nhsggc.scot/your-health/right-care-right-place/addictions/adrs-nutrition-leaflets/

NHSGGC manage your weight web page: Contains information on self management as well as information on the Specialist Weight Management Service. You will also find information on getting active and physical activity opportunities available for each council area.

www.nhsggc.scot/your-health/manage-your-weight

BDA food facts: Contains a range of fact sheets on a variety of nutrition topics.

www.bda.uk.com/food-health/food-facts.html

To be referred to a dietitian: People within Glasgow City ADRS can be referred to an ADRS dietitian via their ADRS worker. Anyone not under Glasgow City ADRS, can be referred to their local community dietitian via their GP.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

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