

Diet and Exercise

Maintaining diet and exercise after a stroke is very important.

WHAT YOU EAT AND DRINK

- If you have trouble swallowing, you may need softer food and/or thickened liquids.
- Refer to your speech therapist's discharge instructions or talk with your physician.

GENERAL HEALTHY EATING STRATEGIES

- Eat whole-grain, high-fiber breads and cereals (3 to 6 servings a day).
- Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables. Choose fruits and vegetables with a wide variety of colors (green, white, red, yellow, orange and purple) to get the best nutrition (5-9 servings a day).
- Drink 5 to 8 glasses of water a day.
- Choose a diet low in saturated fat and moderate in total fat. Eat less animal fat. If you eat meat, eat white meat at least four times more often than red meat.
- Keep foods safe: keep them cold or keep them hot; wash hands and preparation surfaces often.
- If you're trying to maintain or lose weight, eat smaller portions. Don't "upsized" your meals at fast food restaurants.
- Reduce the amount of sugar and other refined carbohydrates in your diet; drink fewer high-sugar sodas and eat less white bread, junk food and candy.
- Choose and prepare foods with less salt, especially if you have any heart problems or a family history of heart disease. The DASH eating plan can help. Click [here](#) to see the details of the DASH eating plan. Click here to visit the [CDC website](#) for more information about low salt diets.
- For tips on healthy eating, [click here to visit the Choose My Plate website](#).

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Daily exercise is very important.
- Ask your rehabilitation team for a home exercise program suitable for your needs after discharge.
- Your rehabilitation team can help you develop a schedule for your exercise program, set achievable goals and track your progress.
- Think about coming back for a "tune-up" with your rehabilitation team every six months to a year.

WEIGHT

- Stay at a healthy weight.
- Your healthcare provider may calculate your body mass index (BMI), a measure of body mass based on your height and weight.
- A BMI of 25 to 30 means you are overweight, and a BMI over 30 is a sign of obesity
- For help tracking your weight, [please click here](#).

