

Medications for obesity

Healthy habits to support your obesity treatment



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Behavioural change and medications for obesity

Medications for obesity help most people eat healthier, manage weight and improve their health. We know from the evidence that people need support to manage their obesity if they stop taking obesity management medications.

This is normal for most people, even if they carry on doing all the things they did when taking medications for obesity. This is not because of a 'lack of will power' or having done something wrong. It happens because of how our bodies work.

This extra resource can help you maintain your habits for the long term. It supports lasting lifestyle improvements, even if you stop taking medications for obesity. However, you may need to continue taking medications for obesity long-term to maintain your weight and health improvements.

Lifestyle changes

Most people who take medications for obesity feel less hungry. This means they eat less food. The medications also help some people drink less alcohol or smoke less by changing signals to the body's 'reward centres'.

If you're taking medications for obesity, it's a good time to start planning how your eating habits and activity levels can turn into lasting behaviours .

Being mindful of your eating patterns, moving your body and having different ways to help you manage stress, look after your sleep and overall wellbeing can help you to manage your weight in the long term.



Planning

Managing your weight over time can be challenging and it is ok if you come across some hurdles along the way. Having a plan and keeping track of your progress can help you realise how far you have come.

Some people find it helpful to write a list of things they can do if things get hard. For example, if it is raining outside, and you don't want to go out for a walk, doing something indoors is just as good, like moving your body to your favourite song, or doing some chair-based activities. It's about having a long-term plan that works best for you, on both good and less good days.



Support

One way that people carry on with their lifestyle behaviours in the long-term is by joining a group of people who are on the same journey. This can be helpful because other people have who similar experiences could offer new ways to overcome some of the challenges you might be facing. They might have some nice recipes to share, or join you for an activity, like walking. Have a look at organisations such as:

Obesity UK

 <https://obesityuk.org.uk/get-involved/support-groups/>

United Kingdom Coalition for People Living with Obesity (UKCPO)

 <https://www.ukcpo.org/pages/support-groups> for their support communities

You can also support others in a similar situation to you. Making shared goals, supporting others, and having support from other people on a similar journey to you could help you to feel more confident and able to manage your weight in the longer term.

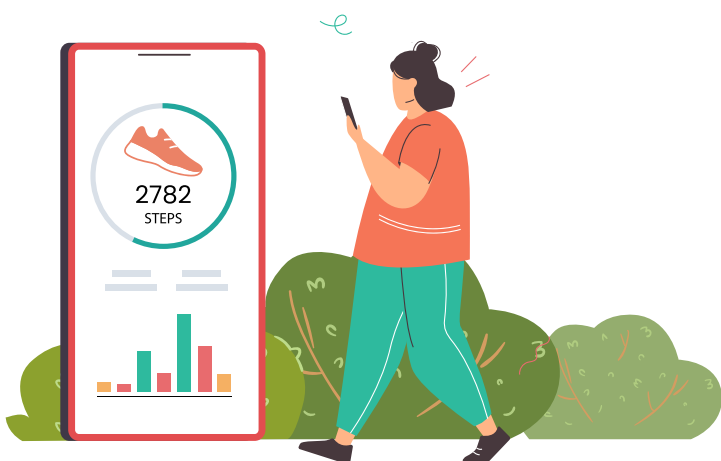
You might also find yourself in a position where you can support others in a similar situation. Making shared goals and having support from other people could help you feel more confident and able to manage your weight in the longer term.



Small, stepped goals for change

When using medications for obesity, people find it helpful to set small, achievable lifestyle goals. We might find it hard to keep changes over time. Trying to make small, manageable changes may help with this.

To manage our weight and improve our health in the longer term we need to consider changes to our lifestyle. We need to adjust our habits. We can set goals for ourselves. For example, walk 5000 steps on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Or, drink 2 litres of water each day. Your goals should be suited to your lifestyle and activity levels, starting from a point that you feel most ready and then you can build from there - it's starting that counts!



Monitoring

You can track your progress by keeping a diary of your achievements or using apps on your phone or watch. This helps us to understand why we set these goals and how important it is to meet them. Remember to set yourself a goal that you will actually be able to meet. Keeping track of your progress can help you to see how far you have come and feel proud of yourself. For some ideas look at:

NHS Better Health - Lose weight

 <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/lose-weight/>

Healthy Weight Healthy You

 <https://healthyweight.wales/tools-and-resources/>

Different things matter to different people. It might be weight, health, activity level, or appearance that is important to you. If staying active is important to you, walking further or faster might motivate you. Seeing your strength improve might also help you keep up with your goals. Achieving your goals can boost your confidence. This will help you feel better about your progress.

Once you meet your goal, set a new one. Keep achieving small wins. This will help you manage your weight and stay healthier. Over time, these goals

Getting back on track

You might find it hard to keep up the changes you have made. You're human. Maybe you were on holiday, it's Christmas, or you simply don't feel like it. These situations can make it hard to follow your plans.

Keeping a record of what you are doing helps you see when you start to lose focus or go off track. This can help get you back on track and to start setting your goals again. Setting small goals can help. They should be easy to manage. Remember to aim for consistency but not perfection: it's a marathon not a sprint.

Getting started

Consider:

What changes can I make to my current lifestyle?

For example, doing a strength activity.

Now break this down and start small.

How often?

Twice a week

How long??

Start for 5 minutes

When?

Each morning before I have breakfast OR in the evening before I have my meal

What will I do?

I will push my body off the wall using my hands

So this goal is now:

'I will push myself off the wall for 5 minutes, twice a week before my evening meal.'

Write down two goals for change here

1

2



Long-term goals for behaviour change

When you've been on medications for obesity for some time, you may notice your weight loss start to slow down or plateau (which means progress starts to be less noticeable) . This is normal. It is important to continue setting small goals for long-term behaviour change to keep healthy. Even if your weight stays the same, this is not your fault, it is how the body responds to weight loss.

Think about how your eating patterns and activity levels are different now. How do they compare to before you started your medications for obesity?

Write down what is different here:

1

2

3

3

At this point, start considering what you might need to do to help keep this behaviour going. This could be:

- ➔ Sharing my goals with friends or family
- ➔ Writing out a weekly shopping list, each week making a meal plan for the week
- ➔ Keeping up a walking group with like-minded people

These will become your long-term goals for change. Consider the same question for goal setting.

- ➔ How often?
- ➔ How long?
- ➔ When?
- ➔ What will I do?

These changes may be challenging, and they may feel simpler when you're on medications for obesity. So, start planning now for the longer term. Aim for consistency and not for perfection.

My long-term goals for change

1

2

3

4

If you need to see a dietitian

Visit your GP for a referral or find a private dietitian. To check if your dietitian is registered visit:



About this publication

This leaflet was produced by specialist obesity dietitians from the British Dietetic Association (BDA) Obesity Specialist Group, with help from health professionals and people with their own experience.

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This leaflet does not replace advice from a dietitian or doctor; it is for information only. You can get this leaflet and others like it from the BDA website for free.

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