



Welcome & Introduction

GETTING OFF TO A GOOD START

Congratulations on your decision to join our weight management program!

We offer a state-of-the-art weight management programs that combine the talents of many people (including you!) to provide a personalized weight loss experience. We use this approach because we know that losing weight and keeping it off is not always easy and that we usually need “a little help from our friends.”

The people you can count on during your program include:

- Your friends and family who can lend support to your weight management efforts.
- The physician, nurse practitioner, physician’s assistant and medical assistant who will regularly monitor your health status and help you learn more about eating right, adapting to higher physical activity levels, and managing stress.

You and your support team will work together to help you adopt healthy habits that will aid in your ongoing weight management efforts. You can remain a part of the program long after you have reached your weight loss goal, to support your ongoing efforts to manage weight.

Your commitment to and enthusiastic participation in the Alaska Premier Health weight management program are critical to your success. It is important to know that you have so many caring, competent people behind you when you need them. We are looking forward to working with you!

Tools for Success:

- **Recognize the factors that contribute to long-term weight management**
- **Determine personal advantages and disadvantages of managing your weight**
- **Recognize the benefits of participating in a formal weight management program, including those related to nutrition, physical activity, safety and support.**
- **Identify ways to eat with others while adhering to your dietary prescription**

ADVANTAGES & DISADVANTAGES OF MANAGING WEIGHT

Losing weight and maintaining a lower weight are efforts that may, at least initially, require a great deal of determination and motivation. Your motivation level will depend on your unique set of reasons or “advantages” for weight management. An advantage may be as general as “improving my health” or “increasing my self-esteem.” Or it may be as specific as “reducing my diastolic blood pressure to below 90.”

Identifying your own set of **advantages** and keeping them in the forefront of your mind as you progress through the program will increase your motivation to manage your weight.

List the advantages of managing your weight that are most likely to motivate you. Include only the advantages that you truly value at this time.

Disadvantages of managing your weight may occasionally sabotage your progress. Some disadvantages may be readily apparent to you, such as “need a new wardrobe” or “avoiding impulse eating.” Other disadvantages may be subtler, such as “certain friends prefer me to be overweight” or “difficulty adjusting to my new self-image.”

Advantages

Disadvantages

As you progress through the program, continue to review, revise, and address the advantages and disadvantages of managing your weight.

ENSURING SUCCESS

Research has shown the following factors to be predictors of long-term success in weight management. This program incorporates these factors into a system that coordinates participants’ goals with the expertise of highly trained professionals.

This weight management program uses the latest techniques and information to help you develop these and other skills so that you can manage your weight for a lifetime.

- **Internal Motivation** – People who are losing weight for themselves, rather than for someone else, are the most successful over the long term. Our program encourages people to undertake lifestyle change from a sense of personal responsibility and commitment.
- **Physical Activity** – It is difficult to maintain your weight without regular physical activity. Climbing the stairs, parking farther away from the entrance to the shopping mall, and working in the yard and house are some of the ways you can increase your physical activity through daily activities. Regular physical activity affects both your physiological and psychological status. This program encourages increased physical activity through daily habits.
- **Positive Changes** – Focusing on the many positive changes that occur when you lose weight, rather than only focusing on the number of pounds lost, is another predictor of long-term weight management. Our program emphasizes improvements such as lowered blood cholesterol and blood pressure, improved self-esteem, feelings of well-being, and enhanced ability to do daily tasks, in addition to actual weight management.
- **Coping Skills** – People who learn specific problem-solving strategies and coping skills are better able to manage their weight when they find themselves under stress, frustrated, or depressed. It's easier to gain weight when you are under prolonged stress or must deal with other negative influences, such as frequent travel, business dinner or parties, etc. This program will help you prepare for high-risk situations and learn to cope with them. We emphasize "Skill-power" rather than willpower.
- **Support Systems** – Successful weight management is easier if you have positive support systems. We will help you identify people to build your support network and help you communicate your needs for support.
- **Ongoing Support** – Weight management is a lifelong process, and may require ongoing assistance. We're here to assist you with managing your weight and improving your health and quality of life, both now and in the future.

MEAL REPLACEMENT ADVANTAGES

When you consume more energy (calories) than you expend, you have a positive energy balance, and the excess energy is stored as body fat. When you burn more calories than you consume, you are in negative energy balance, and your body uses stored energy (body fat) to meet your energy demands.

To lose weight, you must increase your energy expenditure and decrease your energy intake to create a negative energy balance.

Full meal replacement supplements (Like OPTIFAST) are portion-controlled to give you precise control over the calories that you consume without weighing or measuring. This makes it easier for you to maintain a reduced calorie intake over a long period of time. It also allows you to concentrate more of

your energy and time on learning new habits in other areas, such as increasing physical activity, developing a supportive environment, and coping with “lapses.” You’ll learn how to manage calorie intake as you gradually return to self-prepared foods later in the program.

BENEFITS OF MEAL REPLACEMENT PRODUCTS

A clinical trial published in the medical journal *Obesity* in January 2019 showed significant advantages to full meal-replacement interventions versus food-based diets. The meal replacement diet utilized OPTIFAST as meal replacement - in the year-long randomized, head-to-head, clinical trial, the OPTIFAST Program resulted in an average weight loss two-fold higher than a reduced-calorie, food-based diet and lifestyle intervention. [Link to Clinical Trial](#)

- **Appropriate calorie level** – The program’s dietary prescription will produce significant weight loss for all individuals who adhere to the protocol.
- **Low in fat** – Research shows that lowering the fat content of a person’s diet is important in maintaining appropriate body weight. In addition, reducing fat intake is an important strategy for reducing blood cholesterol levels. It’s important to note that the program’s nutritional products do provide some dietary fat, which is essential for the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins like A, D, E and K. The fat and protein in these foods also provide a regular stimulus for healthy gallbladder function.
- **Carbohydrates** – While most body tissues will use either carbohydrate or fat for fuel, carbohydrate in its simplest form, glucose, is the required fuel for your brain and nervous system. Your body derives glucose from the carbohydrate in your diet or from converting body proteins (such as muscle) into glucose. Including some carbohydrate in the meal replacement products helps reduce the amount of muscle that is “robbed” to generate glucose.
- **High-Quality Protein** – a major component of good meal replacement products like OPTIFAST. Protein in the diet is important because it is the source of amino acids, the building blocks for tissue growth, repair, and maintenance. If the body does not get enough protein, it will rob its muscles and other lean tissues. This can lead to significant loss of muscle tissue, an undesirable consequence of an inadequate diet. Research has shown that an adequate amount of protein can prevent loss of muscle tissue during weight loss. On Very Low Calorie Diets (VLCD) which can be as low as 800 calories, OPTIFAST products provide adequate levels of protein, particularly during the early weight loss phases when your body needs it most. This is an important reason for consuming all of your daily dietary prescription.
- **Essential Nutrients** – Vitamins and minerals are other nutrients essential for good health. When consumed according to the dietary prescription, these products provide 100 percent of the Recommended Dietary Intake for 24 vitamins.

Gradual return to self-prepared food – This gradual return allows you to begin practicing, little by little, new skills for controlling calorie intake. A gradual return to regular food is also important because it lets your body readjust to processing whole foods.

- **Ongoing Support** – Once you complete the program, continuing support will help you maintain your weight or deal with occasional weight fluctuations. The program staff are available to help you deal with weight management issues.
- **Increase lifestyle activity** – Increasing energy expenditure through increased physical activity is an essential element of successful weight loss and weight management. You'll learn ways to increase your energy expenditure through modification of lifestyle activities.

You will be provided with dietary prescriptions for each phase of the program, as well as nutrition information and tips such as managing food cues, preparing low-fat meals, and dealing with lapses.

WAYS TO EAT WITH OTHERS

The following suggestions will make it easier to eat with others while using meal replacement products, such as OPTIFAST. Which suggestions are most likely to work for you? What other strategies might you try?

At Home

- Avoid buying foods that are difficult for you to pass up. Clean them out of the cabinets and the refrigerator.
- Don't leave food sitting out in the kitchen or in other areas of your home. Store foods properly.
- Avoid leftovers by packaging foods in serving sizes appropriate for the rest of your family.
- Stay out of the kitchen except to prepare and eat your own meals. If you must prepare family meals, do so when you are satisfied with product on your plan.

With the Family

- Eat with family members so you can enjoy talking with them
- If you find yourself growing hungry at the sight of food, skip family dinners, at least in the beginning. If you choose not to eat with the family, find other ways to spend time together.
- Ask family members to prepare their own meals for the first few weeks of your program.
- Ask family members to avoid snacking when you are in their company.

If Invited Out to Eat

- Plan to take your own nutrition product. Nutrition bars or shakes may be a good choice for eating away from home. Call ahead to see if the restaurant will permit you to bring your own product. If the restaurant can't accommodate you, or if you are not able to bring your product for business or other reasons, there are reasonable alternatives you could order – for one serving, you can substitute 12 ounces of skim milk OR 2 ounces of turkey, chicken, or other lean meat OR ½ cup cottage cheese OR 2 eggs (boiled or poached) AND 6 oz. orange, pineapple, or grapefruit juice.
- Have your meal before going out. Order coffee, tea, or another non-caloric beverage to drink while others have their meal.
- Don't look at the menu. Be prepared to say no to bread, samples of others' food, desserts, etc.
- If you are not ready to eat out, meet friends for coffee, tea, or another activity unrelated to food.

MY PLANS FOR EATING

I anticipate the following challenges:

I can overcome these challenges by:

TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

The following tips have been successful in helping others get started in the program. Learning these skills and adopting these attitudes will help you maintain new eating and activity patterns.

- Take one day at a time. Think positively. Every day is a new day. Forget the "all or nothing" attitude. Strive to be your best!
- Remember that you can always get "back on track" at any time during the day or week. You don't have to wait for tomorrow morning or next Monday.
- Plan ahead. Be prepared to use products away from home.

- If possible, have someone else cook and clean up after family meals.
- Follow your food and activity plans. Record your daily food intake and activities in your daily diary.
- Drink at least two quarts of non-caloric fluid every day. Drink non-caloric beverages to “fill up” when you feel hungry.
- Plan to reward yourself with things other than food.
- Make a commitment to keep records of your progress. Accountability and ongoing support will get you through the tough times.
- Distract yourself from thinking about eating by engaging in other activities.
- Plan to increase your daily physical activity.
- Discuss the program with a family member or friend. Let others know how they can provide support. Give them specific suggestions, such as not eating snacks in your presence, not offering you food, or volunteering to do the grocery shopping or cooking.

List other strategies below that are helpful to you:

FOLLOW YOUR DIETARY PRESCRIPTION

The following suggestions will help you adhere to your dietary prescription.

Stay on Schedule – We strongly encourage you to consume your nutritional items at regular times each day. You can create a daily diary or set up alarms on your mobile device.

Refreshing Recipes – Read the Learning module titled “Refreshing Recipes” for alternative ways to consume shakes, powders, and soups. If you’re feeling bored with the taste options it is a great way to mix it up!

Drinking Liquids – You need to drink at least two quarts of non-caloric liquid a day in addition to the liquid consumed with the product. Failure to drink sufficient fluid each day could result in dehydration or electrolyte imbalance. Pay extra attention to fluid intake during warm, dry weather.

You may drink all of the non-caloric, decaffeinated beverages that you want, although we recommend that at least half of your daily non-caloric liquid be plain water. Caffeine is a diuretic, so limit your intake of caffeinated beverages to two servings per day.

- **Water** – Tap water or naturally carbonated spring waters that are free of sugars (sucrose, fructose, corn syrup, glucose, etc.).
- **Black Coffee** – Instant, brewed, or drip. If caffeinated, limit to two cups per day. Coffee whiteners are not recommended; however, up to ¼ cup of skim milk can be used per day (provides 20 calories).
- **Tea** – Plain, flavored, herbal, or instant. If caffeinated, limit to two cups per day.
- **Diet Sodas** – Any that contain more than two calories per 12-ounce can. If caffeinated, limit to a reasonable amount per day. The sodium content of diet sodas varies, so if sodium is a potential problem for you, limit the quantity of diet soda that you drink.
- **Sugar-free Lemonade** – Or drink mixes, such as Crystal Lite.

MEDICATION LIST

In general, the following medications are acceptable if needed. This list is not a comprehensive one, nor is it intended to promote the use of medications or any particular brand. Prior to using any medication:

- Do not exceed the recommended dosages.
- Read the following instructions on the label, or your physician’s instructions
- If you have questions regarding these medications, check with your clinic physician.
- Medications should be carefully monitored.
- Be sure to report any physical symptoms you are experiencing and any medications you take to the clinic physician. If unexpected symptoms develop, notify your personal physician immediately.

1. Headache/Pain Relief:

- a. Tylenol
- b. Datril
- c. Darvocet N (1)
- d. Darvon
- e. Ibuprofen (occasional use only)

i. Advil

ii. Nuprin

iii. Medipren, etc.

2. Constipation

- a. Benefiber

- b. Sugar-free Metamucil
 - c. Gentle Ex-Lab (pills)
 - d. Suppositories
 - i. Glycerin, Dulcolax
 - e. Milk of Magnesia (not chocolate or mint flavored)
3. Hemorrhoids
- a. Tucks
4. Cold Symptoms
- a. Dimacol
 - b. Dristan
 - c. Triaminic
 - d. Antihistamines
5. Diarrhea
- a. Kaopectate
 - b. Pepto-Bismol
 - c. Benefiber
6. Vomiting
- a. Dramamine
 - b. Emetrol
7. Indigestion/Heartburn
- a. Mylanta
 - b. Maalox
 - c. Gelusil
 - d. Riopan
 - e. Roloids
 - f. Pepto-Bismol

POTENTIAL ADAPTATIONS TO DIETARY CHANGE

Our weight management program is medically supervised. We want to be sure that your body is adjusting properly to a lower number of calories. The clinic physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner will follow your progress very carefully, reviewing your blood work and making necessary recommendations. You need to keep all your scheduled appointments for physician visits and blood work.

It's always helpful to know what to expect when making a change in your life. Listed below are some of the physiological and psychological changes you might experience during your first weeks on the program. You probably won't experience all of these changes. Make note of any of the conditions that you experience and report all symptoms to the clinic staff at your next scheduled visit or sooner if you feel the need.

- **Fatigue** – You are consuming fewer calories that your body is used to. Until it adjusts, you may feel more tired or weak, or feel a lack of energy. Get plenty of rest, eat all of the prescribed items in your food plan, do only moderate activities, and drink plenty of fluid.
- **Dizziness** – This occurs because the body eliminates large amounts of water and salt during weight loss. One benefit is lowered blood pressure, but it can become a problem if it produces light-headedness. If you experience dizziness, increase your non-caloric fluid intake by one quart daily, and stand up slowly to allow your blood pressure to adjust.

- **Dry Mouth** – If you become dehydrated, your mouth could feel dry. Increase your intake of water.
- **Headache** – Many factors can cause headaches. Follow your food plan, don't skip meals, and see the medications list for headache pain relief.
- **Food Cravings** – Since you are used to eating self-prepared food, it takes a while for your mind to adjust to only proportioned products. Cravings are temporary. Distract yourself with other thoughts and activities.
- **Bad Breath** – When you are not consuming self-prepared food and chewing, you may need to pay more attention to dental hygiene, using more frequent brushing and flossing to avoid bad breath. Use mouthwash, chew sugarless gum (only three sticks per day), and drink water after consuming the product.
- **Dry Skin, Brittle Nails, or Hair Loss** – These temporary conditions are due to an adaptation in body metabolism. Growth of skin, nails, and hair will all return to normal when you resume eating regular food. Use moisturizing lotion after bathing, avoid deodorant soap, and keep nails well-trimmed.
- **Muscle Cramps** – Muscle cramps in the legs and feet may be due to changes in electrolyte balance or to your increase in physical activity. Increase your intake of non-caloric fluids and perform stretching exercises frequently.
- **Frequent Urination** – This is due to an increase in fluid consumption and lower sodium intake. Reduce your intake of caffeine (a mild diuretic). Be sure to drink at least two quarts of fluids a day in addition to the product.
- **Constipation** – You may only have bowel movements every two to four days, instead of daily. Take a fiber supplement (see the medications list) and drink plenty of non-caloric fluids. If you experience pain with bowel movements, or hemorrhoids, take a laxative as prescribed by the physician. Physical activity will help relieve the symptoms. Discuss the problem with your physician or staff if these issues persist.
- **Diarrhea** – It is unlikely that something in the nutritional products would cause diarrhea. See the medications list. Increase your intake of non-caloric fluids to prevent dehydration.
- **Minor Illness** – Your prescribed diet can usually be continued during a short bout of minor illness. However, if you are unable to take the product due to nausea and/or vomiting, you should substitute the following foods for 1 serving of nutritional product: 8 oz broth and 1/2 cup sugar-free Jell-O, or 6 oz apple juice and 1/2 cup Jell-O. If unable to keep anything down, or if significant nausea lasts more than two days, contact your physician.

- **Other** – Please refer to the Informed Consent materials provided to you during your discussions with program staff regarding these or other possible side effects.