

## Look what you can do for your heart at [www.sistertosister.org](http://www.sistertosister.org)

- Learn the facts about heart disease
- Locate a nearby screening center
- Assess your personal level of risk
- Build a customized action plan
- Track your heart health progress
- Ask experts for advice
- Give and get community support
- Discover daily heart health tips...and more!



**Sister to Sister: The Women's Heart Health Foundation,** a national 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is dedicated to preventing heart disease in women by:

- Offering women free cardiac screenings to promote early detection and treatment of heart disease and its risk factors.
- Increasing awareness that heart disease is the number one killer of women in the United States.
- Helping women make healthy lifestyle changes to reduce their risk of heart disease.

### **SISTER TO SISTER**

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## Managing Your Weight



# YOU HAVE THE POWER TO HAVE A HEALTHY HEART



**SISTER TO SISTER**  
The Women's Heart Health Foundation

## The Weight/Heart Health Connection

If you are overweight, you are not alone. More than 60 percent of all American women age 20 or older are overweight, and more than 30 percent are obese (extremely overweight). The more overweight a woman is, the greater her risk for heart disease, stroke, congestive heart failure, breathing problems, and even some cancers.

*Losing even a small amount of weight can make a big difference in reducing your risk for heart disease.*

Most of can tell when we've put on too many pounds. Still, it is important to do a formal weight check to help determine how much, if any weight, you need to lose to be healthy. There are two ways to find out if your weight is considered healthy:

**Body Mass Index (BMI)** measures a person's weight and height to determine a healthy body weight. Go online to [www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/](http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/) to calculate your BMI. **A BMI of 18.5 to 24.9 is normal weight; a BMI 25.0 to 29.9 is overweight; a BMI of 30.0 or greater is obese.**

**Waist circumference.** Fat deposits, especially around the abdomen, are an independent heart disease risk factor. You can measure your waist by wrapping a non-elastic measuring tape around your waist, above your belly button. Make sure the tape is snug and does not squeeze your skin, and is parallel to the floor. **A waist circumference of 35 inches or less is ideal for women.**

Talk to your doctor about your weight if your BMI and/or waist circumference are high. This is especially important if you have other heart disease risk factors.

## Just Between Us...



The Skinny On Commercial Diets

**If you decide to go on a commercial weight loss program, look for:**

- A program that includes counseling to help you change eating and activity habits.
- Qualified professionals who can offer stress management strategies and help setting realistic weight loss.
- No hidden program costs – make sure you understand all fees up front.

## YES YOU CAN MANAGE YOUR WEIGHT

### 10 Heart Healthy Changes

1. To lose weight, most overweight people will need to cut 500 to 1,000 calories a day from their current daily diet.
2. Drop pounds gradually, meaning no more than a pound to two pounds per week.
3. Avoid skipping meals or going on fad diets. These methods may lead to more rapid weight loss, but people who resort to these methods are also more likely to gain the weight back, and more.
4. Watch your portion sizes. One way to work on eating smaller portions is to eat on smaller plates and avoid going back for second helpings.
5. Eat a heart healthy diet, which includes plenty of vegetables and fruits as well as whole grains, low-fat and fat-free milk, fish, lean meat, poultry, dry beans. Choose foods that are low in fat and added sugars.
6. Set small, realistic goals. Even losing 5 to 10 percent of your starting weight can help reduce your risk for heart disease and other health conditions.
7. Record your progress: Write down what you eat, what exercises you do, and how much weight you lose. Try weighing yourself only once or twice a week at the same time of day to accurately track your weight.
8. Figure out what triggers you to overeat, such as snacking while watching TV or going out to eat with a friend who loves to order fatty, high calorie foods. Work to avoid those triggers.
9. Put your fork down between bites and eat slowly so you feel satisfied sooner. This can help you avoid second helpings.
10. It's easy to mistake thirst for hunger. If you've eaten a reasonable meal portion and you still feel hungry, or if you find yourself hungry between meals, drink a glass of water and then wait a few minutes to see how you feel before reaching for food.

GET MORE TIPS AT [SISTERTOSISTER.ORG](http://SISTERTOSISTER.ORG)