



HEALTH AWARENESS

Take Control Of Your Weight

(NAPSA)—Controlling your weight may seem simple: Eat less and exercise more. But it's harder than it sounds. Researchers have recently found several factors influencing your weight that you might not be aware of. Once you identify the things that affect your weight, you can start changing those habits.

You probably have a pretty good idea what a healthy diet is. Unfortunately, studies show that Americans are not eating enough fruits, vegetables and whole grains. And we're eating too much fat and salt. So where are we going wrong?

Part of the problem, according to Dr. Andrew Rundle of Columbia University, is that so many things around us influence the seemingly simple balance between how many calories we eat and how many we burn. "I've often thought that the obesity epidemic is an epidemic of a thousand paper cuts," he says. "So many things prod us throughout the day to raise our calorie intake and lower our energy expenditure."

Here are some things to think about:

Don't guess at calories. Use nutrition labels, and make sure to look at the number of portions. That muffin might seem like it has 150 calories, but if the serving size is $\frac{1}{3}$ of a muffin, it really has 450. At restaurants, ask for nutrition information or check the Web site before going.

Watch your portions. Super-sized dishes aren't a good value if they get you to eat more than your body needs. Order smaller dishes, share larger ones or set aside a portion to take home with you before you even put a bite in your mouth. At home, try serving food on smaller plates and bowls.



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Think about the whole meal. Don't just focus on the main course. Everything you put in your mouth counts.

Cut the sugar. Don't let sugary sodas and other sweets crowd out healthy foods and drinks.

Get enough sleep. People who get less sleep have a higher risk of obesity (along with other health problems).

Don't eat out of habit. Mindless eating at work or in front of the TV, especially when you're sleepy, can pack on the pounds.

Keep track of how much you're eating. Keep wrappers, empty containers and bones nearby to remind you of how much you've eaten.

Get active. Look for opportunities to add physical activity to your daily routine.

Do it together. Family, friends and coworkers can all help each other make healthy changes to their lives.

—Adapted from *NIH News in Health*, a publication of the National Institutes of Health (newsinhealth.nih.gov).