## January is Healthy Weight Awareness Month

For millions of Americans, the subject of weight weighs heavy on the mind – not to mention, a little around the middle – as we begin a new year. As we pack away festive holiday decorations (and, perhaps, sneak in one last holiday cookie) many of us make a resolution to lose weight. Unfortunately, only 8% of people ultimately achieve this goal.

Maintaining a healthy weight isn't important just because you want to fit into that special outfit – it also helps you prevent and control many diseases and chronic conditions. Being overweight increases one's risk of developing heart disease, type 2 diabetes, gallstones, breathing problems, joint problems and certain cancers, to name but a few.

So how to go about reaching a healthy weight? Forget about "as seen on TV" magic pills or other short cuts. Instead, focus on reducing your caloric intake and becoming more physically active.

There are many factors that contribute to a healthy weight, including environment, genetics, and metabolism. These are all unique to an individual, which is why it's beneficial to set realistic weight goals with the help of your family doctor. Once the program is in motion, follow-up visits to monitor progress are a must. With a little discipline, you can be among that elite – and lighter – 8% when the next new year rolls around!
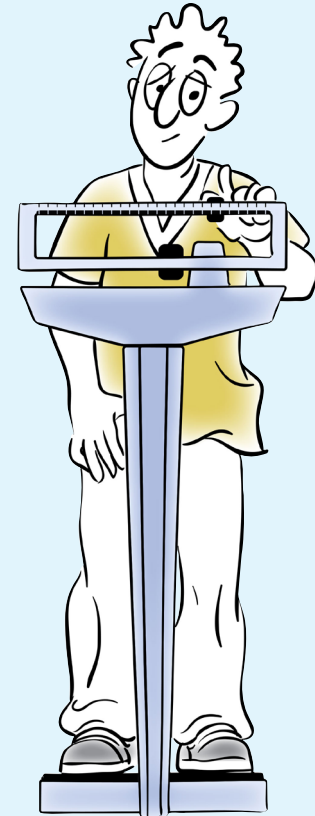
Get a Head Start on Reaching a Healthy Weight

Healthy diet.

While diets will vary based on personal factors, some tips are fairly universal:

• Practice moderation.

• Emphasize veggies & fruits.

• Chew your food slowly.

• Drink plenty of water.

Healthy exercise.

However you prefer to work out, remember to:

• Warm up and cool down.

• Balance weight resistance and cardio exercises.

• Stay hydrated.

• Don't overdo it.

Healthy lifestyle.

And for all that time in between meals and exercise:

• Don't smoke, and drink alcohol only in moderation.

• Avoid stress.

• Get eight hours of sleep.

• Have fun and enjoy life!