How often should you weigh yourself?

Want to know how often you should weigh yourself? Turn to one of the best experts on your health and wellness: yourself. Consider this: You’re following a healthy diet and getting regular physical activity. You step on the scale and see that your weight is a little bit higher than it was the day before. How do you react?

1 I keep in mind that this is just a variation in my weight, not a reflection of how well I’m managing my weight. I remind myself that I’m on the right track. I give myself credit for everything I’m doing well and remind myself to stay focused on following a healthy diet and getting regular physical activity.

2 If I gain even a tenth of a pound, I panic. I vow to starve myself or plan a punishing workout so I can get my weight back under control.

Weighing yourself regularly is critical to reaching and staying at a healthy weight. It allows you to catch weight gains before they get out of hand and make changes that help you return to a healthy weight and avoid more weight gain.

If your answer is 1, you probably understand that your weight can vary short term for many reasons. Calories and fluid, physical activity, and medication and hormone changes can all play a role.

If your answer is 2, weighing yourself more often may do more harm than good. This can lead to behaviors that will set you up for failure.

No matter how often you weigh yourself, it’s your weight over time that matters most. Weigh yourself daily if it motivates you to stay on track. If weighing yourself daily doesn’t help you, weigh yourself weekly instead.
How people use the Internet has been changing. In addition to simply seeking out information, people use the Internet as a place to connect with others. Many online conversations take place on platforms known as social media. Online forums, blogs and social networks such as Facebook are all types of social media.

Social media tools can help you find the information and support you need – but you may find them overwhelming and not know how to use them.

If you haven’t spent much time using social media for health information and support, start with these suggestions.

**Before posting, ask yourself these 3 questions**
- Who is my audience? Is what I’m posting appropriate for all ages? Does what I’m posting add value to the conversation?

**Watch and learn**
- Spend some time visiting the different types of social media tools you’re thinking about using.

**Use general conversation rules**
- When you interact online, be real and show respect for others. You’ll be judged more by how you listen than by what you say.

**Identify your need**
- Are you looking for information? Feedback? Support from others? This can help you figure out which types of social media tools to use.

**Be respectful and appropriate**
- Remember: Once you post something, it’s permanent. Be positive and mindful of others when you post online.

**Get the rules of the road**
- Read up on user rules and policies for any social media tool you want to use.

Social media tools can give you a voice and a community. They can allow you to walk with others on your health journey. When used appropriately, they can help you make choices and give and receive support in a way that can help improve your overall health and wellness.

**ALCOHOLISM RECOVERY: HOW TO PROVIDE SUPPORT**

**Get educated.** Learn as much as you can about alcoholism and the ongoing recovery process.

**Be positive.** Your loved one needs your support now more than ever. Instead of criticizing, focus on what your loved one is doing right.

**Rethink activities.** Don’t offer your loved one alcohol or drink in your loved one’s company. Support your loved one’s healthy habits, such as getting regular exercise and engaging in interests or hobbies that aren’t centered around alcohol.

**Don’t overload.** Your loved one needs to focus on recovery. It may be best not to ask him or her to take on new demands right now.

**Support spiritual practice.** Research shows that people who engage in some type of regular spiritual practice may find it easier to maintain recovery from alcoholism or other addictions.

**Seek your own support.** Taking part in a support group can help you cope with your loved one’s disease. For example, Al-Anon can provide support and help you connect with others affected by someone else’s alcoholism. In many communities, Alateen groups also are available for teenage children of people who have alcoholism.
Strong social support is one of the keys to happiness and good health. But sometimes it can be hard to develop and maintain positive social connections. Here are some ways to increase your social support.

**MyStory**

**Ara Celi DiCostanzo: ‘I turned to the people I knew’**

While pursuing a dream, Ara Celi DiCostanzo learned an important lesson: Friends are an important part of life.

At age 21, Ara Celi left home for the first time to pursue her dream to be a doctor. Going to medical school was a lifelong calling for Ara Celi. Her father taught animal science, and her brother had a chromosome disorder. Becoming a doctor meant a lot to Ara Celi.

It meant so much, in fact, that Ara Celi's life became all about her schoolwork. "I cut myself off from everyone. I needed to prove myself," Ara Celi says. There was just one problem with this approach: Ara Celi thrived on being around people and having a rich network of friends.

At the same time, Ara Celi ran too much and didn’t vary her physical activity. She injured herself often, partly because she didn’t vary her activity. Eventually, a painful injury sidelined her from running for two to three months. On top of everything, Ara Celi was struggling in school. She placed unreasonable expectations on herself and got upset when things didn’t go well.

Ara Celi’s mentor at school saw the challenges she was facing and had a heart-to-heart with her. “You need to step back, or you’re going to crash and burn,” Ara Celi remembers her mentor saying. She needed to reach out to other people – something Ara Celi had forgotten. Away from the friends and family she knew, Ara Celi wasn’t sure what to do. But then she realized she had people she could turn to – people she’d met at the gym where she worked out.

Since that day, two things have happened: Ara Celi’s network of friends has grown, and she varies her physical activity. In short, she’s finding balance in her life – with a little help from her friends.

“Learning how to find balance in her life has given Ara Celi new self-confidence, too,” Ara Celi says. “I feel like I’m starting to learn how to listen to myself. I feel more in tune to what I need.”

For more information on how to increase your social support, contact Embody Health at EmbodyHealthnewsletter@mayo.edu.
In-network vs. out-of-network providers

Do you know if your health plan coverage includes a provider network? If so, do you know the difference between in-network and out-of-network providers?

A network includes facilities, providers and suppliers your health plan contracts with to provide health care services.

Your health plan agrees to pay for covered services from certain providers commonly called in-network providers. You may have to pay part of your bill, but it’s usually less than what you’d pay to see an out-of-network provider.

Services from what are commonly called out-of-network providers are paid at a lower rate or may not be paid at all by your health plan. If you get care from an out-of-network provider, the portion you pay depends on your health plan.

Sometimes you may choose to see an out-of-network provider. Treatment for a serious illness that isn’t available through an in-network provider is one example. In an emergency, such as a heart attack, some health plans cover part of your care no matter where you receive it. Or you may choose to keep your provider even if you have to pay more out of pocket.

Because health plans differ widely, it’s up to you to know if your provider is in network or out of network and what services are covered by your health plan. Look at your health plan materials, call your health plan’s customer service number or visit its website if you aren’t sure.

**QUICK QUIZ: TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

1. Your health plan agrees to pay for **in-network** providers.
2. If you see an out-of-network provider, you may have to pay your entire bill. **True**
3. It never makes sense to see an out-of-network provider. **False**
4. If you go to an out-of-network provider for an emergency, you may not have to pay for your entire bill.

**TAKE THE QUIZ, ENTER TO WIN!**

Enter for a chance to win one of Mayo Clinic’s award-winning books!

Name:

Phone number:

Email (optional):

Mail your answers and contact information to EmbodyHealthnewsletter@mayo.edu. Include “Healthy You drawing” in the subject line.

Winners Contest entries must be received by May 15, 2013. One winner will be chosen to receive a Mayo Clinic book of the winner’s choice. Winners will be notified by phone, or if no phone number is given, by email.

**People in all of the Blue Zones share key habits. They eat a healthy diet, get regular physical activity, have a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives, and enjoy a strong sense of community and social support.**

Adapted from Dan Buettner, author of **The Blue Zones**, people are three times more likely than most Americans to live to be 100 years old—and still enjoy life.

Here’s what people in Sardinia, Italy, do to live longer, healthier, happier lives, according to research conducted by Buettner, his colleagues at National Geographic and other researchers that specialize in aging.

Eat a lean, plant-based diet. Eat meat mostly on Sundays and special occasions only.

Put family first.

Celebrate elders.

Take walks.

Laugh with friends.

Drink goat’s milk.

Drink a glass or two of wine each day.

One note: Although Sardinians drink wine moderately, experts caution not to start drinking simply for the health benefits it may provide if you don’t already consume alcohol.
Exercise during cancer treatment: How it can help

If you’re being treated for cancer, physical activity can help.

Taking regular walks and doing gentle resistance training at home made a difference for people receiving cancer treatment, a recent Mayo Clinic study shows. They were able to move more easily, felt less tired and slept better than those who didn’t exercise. Even brief periods of physical activity helped.

Other recent studies confirm these findings. Physical activity can help improve:

- Body weight
- Balance
- Overall fitness
- Muscle strength
- Flexibility
- Quality of life
- Cancer-related pain, nausea, depression and anxiety
- Fatigue, both during and after cancer treatment

The American Cancer Society offers these tips for physical activity during cancer treatment.

- If your red blood cell count is very low, hold off on exercise until it improves.
- If your immune system is weak, don’t go to public gyms and other public areas.
- If you’re getting radiation treatments, avoid swimming pools. Chlorine may irritate the treatment area.

Above all, get your doctor’s OK before you start to exercise. If your doctor says it’s OK, start slowly. Increase your activity level little by little. Stop and call your doctor if you have any concerning symptoms during exercise. Shortness of breath or an increase in pain are examples.
**LEAD POISONING: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

Most people think of old houses and paint when they think of lead poisoning. But other products can be dangerous, too. Traditional home remedies; candies from Mexico; some containers, cookware and tableware; and some toys and even toy jewelry have lead in them. Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/Recalls/default.htm. You’ll find a list here of products that have been recalled because they have lead in them.

If you’re worried about lead exposure in your home, talk to your state or local health department about testing your home for lead. In the meantime, keep children away from any chipping or peeling paint. Regularly wet-mop floors. Wet-wipe windowsills and window wells, which can have high levels of lead dust.

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**Women’s Health**

**How to lose weight and keep it off**

Recent studies offer more ideas about what can help women lose weight and keep it off. Here’s what researchers have learned.

**What you eat matters**

Who was studied: 481 overweight and obese postmenopausal women

What researchers learned: Eating habits linked to weight loss change over time. At six months into the women’s weight-loss effort, eating fewer desserts, dining out less often, drinking fewer sugar-sweetened beverages, eating fewer fried foods and eating more fish were tied to weight loss. At four years into their effort, eating fewer desserts and drinking fewer sugar-sweetened beverages were still linked to weight loss. But women also were eating less meat and cheese and more fruits and vegetables.

**Keep track of what you eat**

Who was studied: 123 overweight and obese postmenopausal women

What researchers learned: Similar to previous research findings, this yearlong study showed that women who kept a food journal lost more weight. Women who had regular meals and ate out for lunch less than once a week also lost more weight.

**Pair diet with exercise**

Who was studied: 225 overweight and obese middle-aged women

What researchers learned: Two years of study showed that women who reduced their emotional eating, adopted a flexible diet, and felt that they were willing to exercise and could achieve their exercise goals were more likely to lose weight and keep it off.

Use these findings to help you develop your own weight-loss plan.

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**Men’s Health**

**Multivitamins and cancer prevention**

A new study sheds light on the role vitamins may play in cancer prevention.

In a recent study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, researchers followed nearly 15,000 men older than age 50 for 14 years. Half the men took a daily multivitamin; the other half took a placebo. After 14 years, the men who took a daily multivitamin had reduced their overall cancer risk by 8 percent. While overall cancer risk was lower, the men didn’t have a lower risk of prostate, colorectal or other site-specific cancers.

This study is one of the first to show a link between multivitamin use and cancer prevention. It also seems to challenge earlier, larger trials. A 2011 study of more than 180,000 men and women found no link between multivitamins and cancer. A 2009 study of more than 160,000 women found that multivitamins didn’t lower the risk of cancer.

When study findings conflict as they do here, the decision to use or not use a therapy is usually a personal one. In situations like this, work with your doctor to make the best choice for your health.

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**If you’re remodeling your home, do it safely. Get remodeling tips and resources from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at www.epa.gov/lead/parents.html#before. For more in-depth remodeling advice from the EPA, visit www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/rrpamph.pdf.**

OR SCAN THIS WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE.
Very veggie egg bake

Serves 6 | Ready in 65 minutes

1 cup frozen chopped spinach, thawed
4 large eggs
4 large egg whites
1 cup skim milk
1 ½ tsp. dry mustard
1 tsp. dried rosemary or 1 T minced fresh rosemary
½ tsp. salt-free herb-and-spice blend
½ tsp. ground black pepper
6 slices whole-grain bread, crusts removed and cut into 1-inch cubes
¼ cup chopped onion
½ cup diced red pepper
4 oz. thinly sliced reduced-fat Swiss cheese

1. Preheat oven to 375° F. Coat a 7-by-11-inch glass baking dish or a 2-quart casserole with cooking spray.

2. Place the spinach in a strainer and press with the back of a spatula to remove excess liquid. Set aside.

3. In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs, egg whites and milk. Add dry mustard, rosemary, spice blend and pepper; whisk to combine.

4. Toss spinach, bread, onion and red pepper in a large bowl. Add egg mixture and toss to coat.

5. Transfer to prepared baking dish and push down to compact. Cover with foil.

6. Bake for 30 minutes or until the eggs have set. Uncover and top with cheese. Continue baking for an additional 15 minutes or until the top is lightly browned. Transfer to a wire rack and cool for 10 minutes before serving.

Nutrition analysis per serving: 180 calories, 5 g total fat (2 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 2 g monounsaturated fat), 130 mg cholesterol, 310 mg sodium, 16 g total carbohydrate (3 g dietary fiber, 5 g sugars), 18 g protein

INGREDIENT SUBSTITUTIONS:
Tips and tricks

It's easy to make your favorite recipes a little bit healthier.

INSTEAD OF
TRY

1 cup whipping cream
1 cup reduced-fat or fat-free frozen whipped topping

1 lb. ground beef
1 lb. ground turkey breast meat

2 slices cooked bacon
1 slice Canadian bacon

1 cup nuts
½ cup toasted nuts

1 egg
2 egg whites or ¼ cup egg substitute

1 oz. unsweetened baking chocolate
3 T unsweetened cocoa powder and 1 T vegetable oil

1 cup shortening, butter, margarine or oil in baked goods
½ cup applesauce or fruit puree and ½ cup oil

1 cup sour cream
1 cup reduced-fat or fat-free sour cream or plain yogurt

1 oz. hard cheese
1 oz. reduced-fat or fat-free cheese

One last trick: Use parchment paper or cooking spray instead of oil or butter to keep baked goods from sticking to the pan.

How can I find quality herbs and supplements?

Quality is a serious matter when it comes to herbs and supplements. Companies that produce them are expected to follow certain manufacturing processes from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The Federal Trade Commission also helps ensure that a product’s information is true. But these safeguards can’t fully guarantee quality.

Check with organizations that test for quality. Some companies test to make sure that products have the ingredients listed on their labels. They also test to ensure that products don’t have harmful levels of contaminants. You may see an approval seal on a product’s packaging. This seal shows that a product has been tested. Examples include:


Do your homework. Get good information about a product by:

- Talking to your doctor.
- Looking for research. Start with these sources.
  - Food and Drug Administration, www.fda.gov
- Contacting the manufacturer directly and asking about its quality-control practices.

CLIP & SAVE
Try these simple ingredient substitutions.
EmbodyHealth: Credible information for Carpenters

continued from page 1

dependent on the Carpenters Health and Security Plan, a website such as EmbodyHealth (www.CarpentersHealth.org) makes it simple to locate reliable health information. All content is researched and written by Mayo Clinic medical professionals.

In terms of credibility, Mayo Clinic ranks among the best. Last year, in fact, a New York Times article had this to say about Mayo Clinic’s content and integrity on the web.

"No hysteria. No drug peddling. Good medicine. Good ideas," said the Times columnist. "This is very, very rare in the medical Web."

EmbodyHealth is not available to the general public. The site was created expressly for the Carpenters Health and Security Plan. Participants, spouses and dependents are strongly encouraged to make it their primary source of health information.

Logging on gives you unlimited access to easy-to-understand articles and advice about...
- Illnesses and symptoms
- Tests and procedures
- Drugs and supplements

EmbodyHealth also offers programs, trackers, calculators, and incentives designed to help you improve your health.

Registration is required to use the site, but it’s free, and only takes a minute to complete. Contact Participant Services at 800-552-0635 to get a special Rewards Number needed to create your EmbodyHealth account.

Other sources of reliable information

Hospital Compare (www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov) is a website produced by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to help you make decisions about where you get your health care. This website compares quality of care at over 4,000 hospitals across the country.

Community Checkup (www.wacommunitycheckup.org) compares the quality of care at hospitals, clinics, and other health care providers in the Puget Sound region. It’s one of many resources offered by the Puget Sound Health Alliance, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving health care quality and affordability in King, Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish and Thurston counties.

Own Your Health (www.wacommunitycheckup.org/ownyourhealth) is part of a Puget Sound Health Alliance campaign designed to help consumers become active participants in their own health care. The website provides trustworthy information, helpful tips and handy tools to help consumers make informed decisions about their health care.