

Welcome to the PEIA Weight Management Program!

As you well know, there are many hard decisions to make when you choose to lead a **healthy lifestyle**, and making choices about **what and how much to eat** are among the most difficult. Finding a balance between what we eat and how we move is an important step. We are here to offer you some helpful resources.

By providing you with nutrition counseling from Registered and Licensed Dietitians, you have direct access to the foremost food and nutrition experts. You will be contacted to set up your first nutrition counseling session during the **second month** of your program. Expect to spend time discussing your medical, weight, and dieting history, current habits, questions, and concerns. You will follow up with your dietitian during **months 4, 6, and 13** to help you stay on track with your personal goals.



Here are some basic guidelines to get you started with making healthy choices until you meet with your dietitian:

1. **Track what you eat.** Research shows that people who track their food intake are *more successful* with weight management than those who do not. Keeping track creates awareness of what you are eating/drinking and can help you see where to make changes.

Here are some recommended on line trackers:

<i>My Fitness Pal</i>	www.myfitnesspal.com
<i>Lose It</i>	www.loseit.com
<i>Spark People</i>	www.sparkpeople.com
<i>USDA Super Tracker</i>	www.choosemyplate.gov

Some of these have great mobile apps that you can use anywhere on your mobile device. Not fond of the web or apps? *Paper and pencil work too!*

2. **Get to know your plate.** If you have not seen it yet, be sure to check out “My Plate” at www.choosemyplate.gov to see how your plate stacks up. This is a great way to plan meals and practice portion control by simply using your plate. Start by filling half your plate with vegetables and fruit. Take a peek at the *Choose My Plate* brochure at <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/foodgroups/downloads/MyPlate/DG2010Brochure.pdf> and learn how to build a healthy plate here <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/foodgroups/downloads/TenTips/DGTipsheet7BuildAHealthyMeal.pdf>

3. **Get to know your habits when it comes to calorie dense, low nutrient foods (empty calories).** Solid fats and added sugars taste good, but they also can add a lot of extra calories. Be aware of **how often** and **how much you eat**, and consider ways to cut back.

Here are some of the biggest culprits:

- *Sweet treats* such as: cakes, cookies, pastries, ice cream, doughnuts and candy
- *Sweetened beverages* such as: sodas, energy drinks/sport drinks, fruit drinks and sweet tea
- *Full fat* cheese, pizza, and *high fat* meats such as sausage, hot dogs, bacon, and ribs
- *Deli meats like:* bologna, pepperoni, salami, etc.

4. **Eat out less and cook more.** We are not suggesting you become a gourmet cook! Simple meal prep and cooking skills are great! Those who prepare foods at home are going to have more control over what they eat, simply because they prepare it themselves. You can control the ingredients and the preparation methods to create healthy, delicious dishes that are good for you and your family. And yes, *you CAN make time*. **Ask your registered dietitian to help you with great tips on how.** You can also check out cooking tips and trends from the **Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics** at <http://www.eatright.org/Public/list.aspx?TaxID=6442452073&page=1> Check out great recipe apps from *Spark People*, *Eating Well* and *Cooking Light* as well.

5. **Start looking at your food as fuel and nourishment for your body.** The human body is a very complex machine. It needs the proper fuel to function at its best. The food we eat provides essential nutrients that our bodies need such as carbohydrate, protein, fat, vitamins/minerals/antioxidants and other compounds, as well as water. All of these nutrients have a specific purpose. So start off by fueling up with a healthy breakfast and give your body nourishing food that it **NEEDS** during the day. Ask yourself, *“Is what I am choosing fuel or fluff?”* If it’s mostly fluff, try making a better choice.

Remember, your registered dietitian will help you personalize your plan based on your nutritional needs, but starting to take a look at these things prior to your appointment can help them, help you. It’s a tough road ahead. Our environment does not make it easy to make healthy choices, but **remember why you have chosen to commit to a healthier lifestyle**. No matter what the reason, *we are here to help you on your journey*.

Let’s get started!