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**STEPS TO
FEELING
GREAT**

Congratulations on the birth of your baby! Like many moms, you might be feeling differently about your body now. Once you and your baby settle into a routine, you will be ready to gradually start taking steps to feel like you again.

Go to your postpartum check up. *Learn ways to stay healthy and bring a list of questions you have for your medical provider. Remember to take it easy at first. Health care providers may tell women not to think about a weight loss plan or exercise for the first six weeks after delivery to allow the body to heal. Sometimes it may take longer before you get the okay.*



Choose from these easy steps to move towards a healthy weight when your body is ready. You can try the steps in any order and see what works for you!

Step 1 Take Small Steps

Your body looks, works, and feels better when you are at your healthy weight. The secret to success is making small positive changes in your eating and level of activity that you can stick to for life!

Safe, long-term weight loss does not happen overnight. Studies show that an average weight loss of one to two pounds per week is most likely to last. Diets that promise large amounts of weight loss in short periods of time are often unsafe and people who follow them are more likely to gain the weight back.

Ask your WIC nutritionist to help you find out what a healthy weight is for you!



Step 2 Be in Charge

Food shopping is your chance to control the foods you have in your home. The process starts even before you head to the grocery store. These tips will help you stick to healthy choices **and** your budget:

- Plan meals for the entire week and write the items you'll need on a grocery list. (It also helps to keep the list on hand and write down ingredients as you run out of them.)
- Always bring your shopping list to the grocery store to help you stay on track.
- Check out the sale flyers for fresh, in-season items.
- Be adventurous and aim to try a new fruit or vegetable each week.
- Avoid going food shopping when you are hungry. You'll be less likely to buy more than you need or choose unhealthy snacks and treats.



Step 3 Add Some Activity

Physical activity is just as important as healthy eating for weight control. When you move, you burn calories and build muscle. The more muscle you have, the more calories you can burn all day long!

Being active helps you look and feel good.

You will be able to:

- Have more energy
- Work off stress
- Tone your muscles
- Get to a healthy weight, and stay there
- Improve your mood
- Keep up with your children!



Experts recommend 30 minutes or more of physical activity at least 5 days a week. Start by setting aside 10-20 minutes each day to be active. Remember, 10 minutes of activity 3 times a day is just as good as one 30-minute session! Be sure to pick activities you enjoy, whether it's walking, taking the kids to the park, or yoga.

Always check with your doctor before starting a new exercise program.

Step 4 Plan Ahead

Eat on a regular basis

- Try to eat 3 small meals and 1 to 2 healthy snacks each day.
- Not eating for long periods of time and skipping meals can slow down your metabolism which makes it difficult to lose weight. You are also more likely to overeat at your next meal or snack.

Rethink your drink

- Choose 1% or skim milk instead of whole or 2%.
- Beware of juice, soda, energy and sports drinks, coffee with cream and sugar, and alcohol—those calories add up quickly!
- Add lemon, lime or orange slices to your water for extra flavor.



Keep healthy 100-calorie snacks on hand

- ½ cup of low-fat cottage cheese and 5 strawberries
- 3 cups of air-popped popcorn (unbuttered)
- 19 mini pretzel twists
- Small handful of nuts (14 almonds)
- Half an apple sliced with 2 tsp. of peanut butter
- Romaine lettuce leaves rolled up with 2 slices of deli turkey and mustard
- ¼ cup of fat-free Ranch dressing and 1 cup of raw vegetables (celery sticks, carrots, grape tomatoes, bell pepper slices)
- 2 Tbsp. of hummus with 1 cup of vegetables



Take sleep seriously

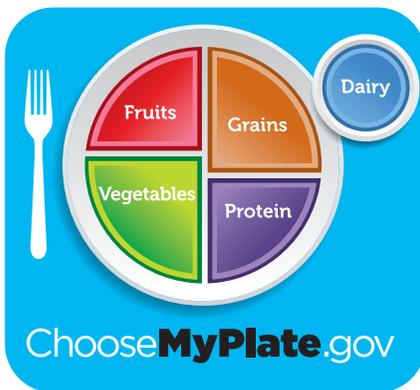
Most new moms find that they don't get enough sleep. Did you know that not getting enough sleep can lead to weight gain and depression? Here are some tips to help you get enough sleep:

- Try your best to sleep when your baby sleeps, day or night. You won't get a stretch of 8 hours of sleep, but every little bit helps.
- Set up a bedtime routine. Whether it's a bath, book or other ritual, routines can help us fall asleep faster.
- Go to bed earlier at night and don't feel guilty about it. Letting some things go may allow you to get much-needed rest.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine which can interrupt your nighttime sleep.
- Involve other family members to help with household chores and caring for the baby.



Step 5 Plan Your Portions

How much you eat is just as important as what you eat. Use the plate model below to help you think about controlling portion size. How does your plate compare?



Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables.

- Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables rich in color.
- Add chopped peppers, carrots or zucchini to meats, sauces or brown rice.
- Top your cereal or oatmeal with bananas or berries.
- Add mandarin oranges, dried cranberries or avocado to your salad.

Fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables all count. Choose low-sodium canned vegetables and canned fruits that are in 100 % fruit juice.

Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with grains, and make at least half your grains whole grains.

To eat more whole grains, make the switch for some of your staple foods. Enjoy whole wheat bread instead of white bread, or brown rice instead of white rice.



Remember, just because a food like bread looks brown doesn't mean it's made from whole grains. Check the label, and choose foods that list the words "whole" or "whole grain" as the first ingredient.

Be adventurous and try these whole grains:

- Barley
- Bulgur
- Brown rice
- Farro
- Oats
- Whole wheat bread and pasta
- Quinoa

Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with lean protein sources.



Try seafood, beans and peas, and nuts as well as meats, poultry, and eggs.

Choose lean cuts and ground meat that is at least 90% lean. Examples of lean cuts are round roast or steak, tenderloin or skinless chicken breast. Trim and drain fat from meat and remove skin from poultry to cut fat and calories.

Bake, broil or grill meat, poultry, fish and seafood for a healthier option!

Select low-fat dairy options.

Choose skim or 1% milk, yogurt and cheese. They have the same amount of calcium and other nutrients as whole or 2% milk, but less fat and calories.



Step 6

Dine Out Wisely



Be aware of what you eat when you are on the go! You may not realize how many calories are in your favorite fast food meal. Here are some ways to make better choices when eating out.

Go for health, not 'value'

Choose smaller portions, or if you order a larger meal, share it! Remember, drinks have calories too—choose water or order a small sized beverage. Here are a few more tips:

- Avoid the breadbasket. Save your appetite for the main meal.
- Restaurant portions are often large. If you're not splitting your meal with someone, bring half of it home to enjoy the next day.
- Ask to substitute a fruit, vegetable or salad for the fries.
- Eat slowly so you will eat less.

Order your fish and chicken wisely

Breading, skin and mayonnaise add a lot of extra calories and fat to your meal. Order grilled or baked items instead of crispy (which usually means fried) or remove the skin and breading before you dig in...and skip the sauce!

Order smart salads

Order the dressing on the side and choose low-fat options. Limit high-fat salad toppings like cheese, bacon, croutons and crispy shells. Instead, try these healthy fixings:

- Mandarin oranges
- Dried cranberries
- Grilled chicken
- Chickpeas or other beans/lentils
- Sunflower seeds
- Avocado



Pick the better pizza

Order your pizza with lots of vegetables instead of pepperoni, sausage, hamburger or extra cheese. Choose thin crust rather than thick, and avoid the crusts stuffed with cheese. Enjoy one slice of pizza and add a side salad for a healthier meal.



Step 7 Set Yourself Up for Success

Be realistic

Remember that slow and steady weight loss is the best way to reach and maintain a healthy weight. Don't expect your body to change overnight. Make small changes in your eating and activity that work with your lifestyle. Set reasonable goals and think about long-term success.

Keep a journal

Keeping track of what you eat is a great weight loss tool. You will see patterns in your eating and find what you can change for a healthier diet. Physical activity journals are also a great way to keep you motivated to move. Some people make a list in their cell phones.



Find a buddy

Set fitness and eating goals with a supportive friend or family member. It is a lot easier to follow through on good intentions when someone else is rooting for you.



Reward yourself...but not with food

When you reach a goal, treat yourself! Spend some time alone with your favorite book or magazine, go to a movie or try on those jeans you've put away in your closet and NOW see how they fit!

Don't give up

If you miss an exercise session or eat more than you planned on a holiday or a get together, don't give up! Everyone slips up now and then. It's what you do long-term that matters. Have confidence in yourself and remember how great you will feel when you reach a healthy weight!

Visit www.mass.gov/MassInMotion to find out more about how you can take small, easy steps to eat better and move more.

**Celebrate all of the positive changes
you're making
towards feeling great!**



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