

Unexpected Weight Change

What are unexpected weight changes?

Stable weight depends on an even balance between energy intake from food and energy output. An unexpected weight change is where you gain or lose weight without trying.

When could you experience weight gain?

Fat cells function as energy reservoirs, and they enlarge or contract depending on how the body uses this energy. If you do not balance energy input and output by adopting healthy eating habits and regular exercise, then fat builds up, and weight gain may occur. A number of medical conditions may contribute to being overweight, although rarely are they a primary cause of obesity.

When could you experience weight loss?

Unexplained weight loss can be caused by: decreased appetite; decreased absorption, which means that food can't be digested properly; and excess demand by the body for energy (calories).

When to see your primary care provider:

- If you have recently been placed on medication. Some medications can cause weight gain or fluid retention.
- If you experience changes in mood. Changes in mood such as depression or anxiety can cause weight gain or loss.
- *A loss of 15 pounds or more in one month, without trying, is usually a cause for concern and you should consult your primary care provider.*

How should I monitor my weight?

1. *Keep track of your diet*

- What foods are you eating?
- How often do you eat?
- Where are you eating (at home, in front of the TV, at a restaurant)?
- Why do you eat (hungry, bored, depressed)?

2. *List the types of exercise you participate in and how often you participate in them.*

3. *Note your reaction to stressful situations and how well you respond to your concerns.*

Once you determine the cause(s) for your change in weight (for example snacking too much or changing from an active job to a sedentary one), you can then change your habits in order to return to your normal weight. You must wait 4 to 6 weeks to see if the changes work.