

## Tips for Nutrition Counseling

Educational efforts should pay particular attention to the following topics:

- Energy value of different foods.
- Food composition: fats, carbohydrates (including dietary fiber), and proteins.
- Evaluation of nutrition labels to determine caloric content and food composition.
- New habits of purchasing—give preference to low-calorie foods.
- Food preparation: avoid adding high-calorie ingredients during cooking (e.g., fats and oils).
- Avoiding over consumption of high-calorie foods (both high-fat and high-carbohydrate foods).
- Adequate water intake (at least eight, 8 oz. glasses per day).
- Reduction of portion sizes.
- Limiting alcohol consumption.

### **What diet should I recommend?**

Aim for a slow, steady weight loss in your patients by decreasing calorie consumption, maintaining adequate nutrient intake, and increasing physical activity. Consider the following options to determine calorie needs to support weight loss.

- To lose weight, in general, diets containing 1,000 to 1,200 kcal/day should be selected for most women; diets between 1,200 kcal/day and 1,600 kcal/day should be chosen for men and may be appropriate for women who weigh 165 pounds or more, or who exercise regularly. If the patient can stick with the 1,600 kcal/day diet but does not lose weight you may want to try the 1,200 kcal/day diet. If a patient on either diet is hungry, you may want to increase the kcals/day by 100 to 200.
- Go to [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) and enter patient's information (age, sex, weight, height and physical activity level) to receive a customized food guide and recommended calorie level for weight maintenance. These amounts can then be modified by a reduction of approximately 500 calories a day for weight loss. The MyPyramid food plans are based on average calorie needs for groups of people and may not exactly match your patient's calorie needs. Monitor weight and recommend adjustments in the calorie level as needed.
- If patient is not losing weight through calorie reduction, consider resting metabolic rate (RMR) testing to more specifically determine patient's calorie needs.
- If possible, refer patient to a Licensed Registered Dietitian for an in-depth dietary assessment.
- Recommend your patient keep a Daily Food and Activity Diary (Patient Handout M) and weigh/measure food portions for increased accuracy of calorie intake. Awareness is an important part of making lasting changes for healthy living. Keeping a diary will increase awareness of what they eat, why they eat (such as hunger levels or eating triggers) and physical activity patterns.