



Our Personal Health Manager offers weight loss help.

# Fight midlife weight gain

**T**he pounds creep on so gradually that it's easy to pretend they don't exist. But sooner or later, you can't ignore them. You've gained a dress size. Or your belt needs an extra notch.

Welcome to an all-too-common rite of passage: midlife weight gain. It's as though our bodies were conspiring against us, and in some ways they are. Consider: ➤ As we age, the body loses muscle. And this loss of muscle can slow the metabolism—meaning the body needs fewer calories to maintain a healthy weight. ➤ Making matters worse, many of us become less active with age and burn fewer calories, increasing the likelihood of weight gain.

And those extra pounds do more than affect the way we look in our bathing suits, especially if they settle around our waist, says Suzanne Farrell, MS, RD, spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association (ADA).

Upper body fat in particular heightens the risk of a host of health

problems, including diabetes, high cholesterol, and early heart disease.

**Take control** With the right mindset, you can keep your weight from inching upward. Or, if it already has, you can trim down. The following tips from Farrell and the ADA can help:

**Change your habits.** If you're inactive, find ways to move more. One easy solution: Sneak exercise into your daily routine. Head for the stairs, not the elevator. Park at the far end of the parking lot and walk the rest of the way.

Already active? Then try working out a little harder or a little longer.

Also, more than ever before, be mindful of what you eat. Scrutinize your diet and look for—and change—habits that promote weight gain. You need fewer calories than you once did. **Consider strength training.** Working out with weights—or doing other kinds of strength training—can speed up an aging metabolism.

**Stay positive.** Let midlife be your gateway to a healthier life.

## 100 calories make a difference in your diet

One hundred calories doesn't sound like a lot. And in some ways, it's not. It's about what you'd find in just 1½ tablespoons of regular mayonnaise or 8 ounces of a soft drink.

But 100 calories here and 100 calories there add up. If you increase your daily calorie intake by 100 calories, for example, in 35 days you will have consumed 3,500 extra calories—the amount that equals

1 pound of body fat.

On the other hand, if you cut just 100 calories from your diet each day, it may help you lose weight. And if you burn 100 extra calories every day, it essentially doubles your efforts.

So how can you make a 100-calorie difference in your diet? The American Dietetic Association offers these suggestions.

To cut 100 calories: ➤ Put

mustard on your sandwich instead of mayo. ➤ Switch to fat-free salad dressing. ➤ Order thin-crust pizza instead of pan pizza. ➤ Drink water with lemon instead of a soft drink.

To burn 100 calories: ➤ Get up 15 minutes early to exercise. ➤ Stand up and move around while talking on the phone. ➤ Go for a 15-minute walk during your lunch break. ➤ Get off the bus early and walk the extra distance.