

How to avoid the obesity trap

Our modern way of life makes it all too easy to pile on the kilos. World Obesity Day on 4 March reminds us to look at our lifestyle choices and find some practical ways to address them.

Obesity is about more than struggling to fit into your clothes. It's a serious health issue and can lead to heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and even certain cancers. It can also just make your life plain miserable by putting strain on joints and muscles, and leaving you exhausted.

Mindless munching

How often do you eat without thinking about it, especially while working at your computer or watching TV? Stop right now! This habit easily leads to overeating and, eventually, weight gain. Instead, make each meal an occasion, sit down at the table, appreciate the flavours and textures, and stop eating when you've had enough (you can always pop leftovers into the fridge).



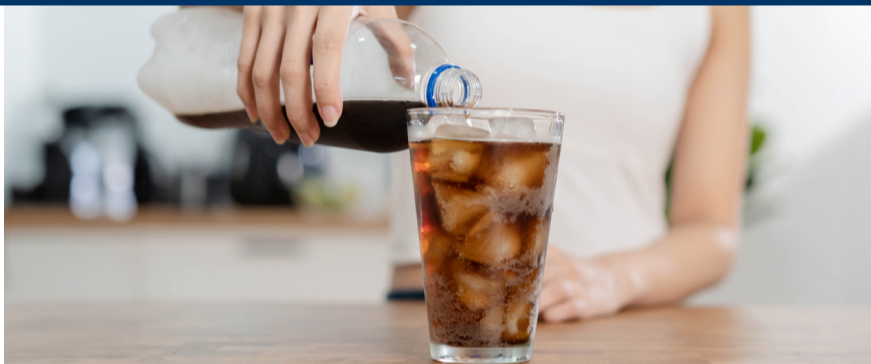
Sluggish lifestyle



We know exercise helps with weight management, mood and overall good health. Yet, here we are, slumped at our desks all day, then collapsing onto our couches after work. What to do? Break it down: Try to add bits of movement throughout your day. Take a brisk walk to grab a drink at teatime, climb stairs to meetings, and do stretches while watching TV. Use an activity monitoring app to stay motivated.

Liquid calories

Sugary drinks, whether a fizzy cooldrink or a frothy cappuccino, are calorie bombs. What's more, artificially sweetened beverages can leave some people craving sugar, so diet cooldrinks may not be the answer either. Rather choose healthier options like sparkling water or herbal teas.



Ultra-processed foods



How can something that tastes so good be so not good for us? It's because ultra-processed foods like cereal, processed meats, chips and biscuits are loaded with sugar, saturated fats, salt and artificial additives, making them heavy on calories and light on nutrients. Ask yourself: Would my grandma recognise this as food? If not, steer clear. Choose fresh fruit and veg, lean proteins and whole grains for most meals; keep ready-to-eat foods for the occasional treat.

Stress eating

Reaching for the choccies after a bad day at work? Self-medicating our stress with quick-fix foods is common, but usually leaves us feeling worse than when we started. Look for better ways to cope, like a walk with the dog, writing down your worries, or chatting to a friend. Your mood and your health will thank you.



For help with tackling health issues, turn to the Employee Health and Wellness Programme.

Here's how to keep it simple

1. Take the time to enjoy your food.
2. Build movement into your day.
3. Drink water instead of the sugary stuff.
4. Fresh food is best.
5. Distract yourself from stress eating with another activity.

References:

World Health Organization (WHO): World Obesity Day

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Let us stay mindful of caring for one another and ourselves