

Rethink Obesity[®]

PATIENT ENGAGEMENT



Realistic goal setting

Discussing and creating achievable goals with your patient is a critical component of weight management. Remember, goals can be changed over time.

Set **S.M.A.R.T.** goals

Specific

Any goal should be highly focused

Vague goal	Specific goal
Lose weight	Lose 15% of my current body weight
Look better in clothes	Comfortably wear <i>[a specific item or clothing size]</i>
Play with the kids more	Be able to walk to the park with the kids without having to stop and rest

Measurable

Each goal should be able to be tracked, so your patient can see when progress is being made

Vague goal	Specific goal	Tracking
Lose weight	Lose 15% of my current body weight	by losing 0.5 kg/week
Look better in clothes	Comfortably wear <i>[a specific item or clothing size]</i>	by dropping one clothing size every 3 months
Play with the kids more	Be able to walk to the park with the kids without having to stop and rest	by halving the number of times I have to stop each month

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Achievable

Each goal should require effort, but not be beyond the capabilities of your patient. Discuss with your patient what has been achieved in the past.

- **What has been tried?**
- **What was achieved?**
- **Why was weight loss not sustained?**

Setting an achievable goal involves a reality check, an understanding of likely roadblocks to success, and either strategies to manage those roadblocks or a rethink of the goal.

Remember, a weight loss goal or time frame should not put a patient at risk of physical or emotional injury.

Relevant

Why does your patient want to lose weight? You may assume they want to 'be healthier', but is that the case? And if so, what does that actually mean?

When both you and your patient understand the underlying motivation for weight loss, it becomes much easier to set meaningful goals.

Timely

Each goal needs a start date and a deadline.

Vague goal	Specific goal	Tracking	End point
Lose weight	Lose 15% of my current body weight	by losing 0.5 kg/week	and achieving my goal within 12 months
Look better in clothes	Comfortably wear <i>[a specific item or clothing size]</i>	by dropping one clothing size every 3 months	and achieving my goal by <i>[end date]</i>
Play with the kids more	Be able to walk to the park with the kids without having to stop and rest	by halving the number of times I have to stop each month	and achieving my goal within 6 months

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One step at a time

STEP 1

Look at the big picture and start by asking what your patient's long-term goals are.

What do you want to be doing in 5 years?

By taking a broad approach your patient will guide the discussion, you can discover what is important to your patient, and it helps you to avoid inserting your ideas of what your patient should be doing.

When you know your patient's long-term aspirations, together you can start planning short-term goals that can help them reach a longer-term objective.

Possible conversation starters

What are some reasonable goals you can set regarding your weight?

What kind of changes are you willing to start with?

STEP 2

With your patient, explore how they will be able to achieve these goals. The steps should be measurable and build on each other over time.

Small steps help set your patient up for success.¹

STEP 3

Set realistic dates for when your patient will aim to achieve both their short- and long-term goals. Importantly, set expectations that obesity management is a long-term process and that when relapse occurs, this should be recognised as feedback and not failure.²

Give the following pages to your patient to help them in goal setting, and provide some simple tips on healthier eating and increased physical activity

References: 1. National Health and Medical Research Council (2013). *Clinical practice guidelines for the management of overweight and obesity in adults, adolescents and children in Australia*. Available at: www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/clinical-practice-guidelines-management-overweight-and-obesity#block-views-block-file-attachments-content-block-1. Accessed February 2024.
2. Hall KD & Kahan S. *Med Clin North Am* 2018;102(1):183–97.



Goal setting for weight management



Identify your short-term and long-term goals and write them on the lines below. Share your goals and your progress with your healthcare professional at each follow-up appointment.

What I want to achieve:

Short-term goal(s) _____

Long-term goal(s) _____

How will I achieve my goal(s):

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

When will I aim to reach my goal(s):

I will aim to reach my short-term goal(s) by _____ (date)

I will aim to reach my long-term goal(s) by _____ (date)

Follow-up:

Date of next visit(s) _____

Notes:



Approaches for healthier eating and increased physical activity

Get in step

- Begin with short walks and gradually increase your time or distance.
- Focus on your posture with your head lifted, tummy pulled in and shoulders relaxed.
- Warm up at an easy pace for the first few minutes.
- Think about how you can incorporate more exercise into your daily life. Get off the bus one stop early or park your car further away to get those extra steps in!
- Stop walking and check with your healthcare professional if you experience pain when walking.

Sizing up healthy eating

- Set aside small portions of healthy snacks to eat when you have a craving.
- Use a portioned plate: 1/2 for fruits or vegetables; 1/4 for whole grains; and 1/4 for proteins.
- Think of reducing amounts, rather than cutting out your favourite foods.
- Establish regular meal times to help avoid overeating later in the day.
- Pre-portion your servings ahead of time by placing a single serving in a container rather than eating directly from the package.

Eating out

- Choose foods that are steamed or baked instead of fried.
- Enlist family and friends to support you in making healthy choices.
- Share an entrée and/or dessert.
- Order smaller portions.
- Research the restaurant to give yourself the best options for ordering.
- Request your meal be served without gravy, sauces, butter or margarine.

Staying on track when you travel

- Pack nonperishable, healthy snacks.
- Make water your drink of choice.
- Bring your own meal if travelling longer distances.
- Find times and places to take walks e.g. waiting in the airport.

Smart shopping

- Plan meals before shopping and make a list.
- Don't shop when you're hungry.
- Buy fresh foods when possible.
- Learn how to read nutrition labels.
- Understand portion size.