



# NEWS RELEASE

## Defense Commissary Agency

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## Take the weight-loss challenge

*By Lt. Col. Karen E. Hawkins,  
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**FORT LEE, Va.** – A new year and a new decade are here, and many of us want to lose a few pounds or try to get in shape. There are many diets out there that promise to help you lose weight, yet not all are safe. Are you ready for a new you? Ready to diet?

As a dietitian, I know that most fad diets people begin at this time of year are bound to fail. Why? They simply are not realistic in their goals and don't focus on how we really eat. Now that's no reason not to try to diet. Medical research shows that if you are overweight, losing as little as 5 to 10 percent of your body weight (that's about 8 to 15 pounds if you weigh 150) may leave you with better blood pressure, improved cholesterol levels and a lower risk of diabetes.

To lose weight gradually and keep it off, here are 10 tried and true tips that you can live with while losing weight and getting in shape.

- **Go slowly.** Set a realistic goal for weight loss and write it down. Losing 2 to no more than 3 pounds a week is generally recommended by the experts. Remember how long it took to gain the weight? Give yourself time to lose it gradually and you are more likely to keep it off as you change your lifestyle habits.
- **Be active.** Calories in, calories out or what you eat is what you get. This means be active. Go walking, swimming, jogging, bicycling and dancing to burn those calories. The key is to make physical activity a part of your everyday life.

- **Go small.** Use the small plate and small bowl at meals instead of the large ones. It's too easy to eat too much when you use a big dinner plate or a large bowl, especially for that nighttime ice cream.
- **Eat fiber.** Aim for 25 to 35 grams of fiber a day. Fiber fills you up and helps you feel full for a long time between meals. Easy ways to get more fiber include eating cereal for breakfast that has 10 or more grams per serving; eat a pear or an apple for a snack; add beans to your meals, soups, and salads; and add a few nuts as a snack or on a salad.
- **Eat protein.** Do not skimp on protein; this includes chicken, fish, turkey, lean beef and pork. It also includes dairy foods like skim milk, yogurt, low-fat cheeses, beans and nuts, all found in your commissary at savings of 30 percent or more. The average person needs 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight, about 60 to 90 grams protein a day.
- **Portion control.** A serving that is bigger than your fist is probably too much to eat – unless it's vegetables, which is the next tip.
- **Eat your veggies.** Eat vegetables at lunch and dinner. Portions are not so important here. In fact, eating vegetables is a good place to cheat if you need to. Make sure to fill up half your plate at meals with vegetables. The fiber, water content and nutrients in vegetables help the body lose weight. Fresh, canned or frozen veggies are all great choices. Avoid the sauces, though, as they add many extra calories.
- **Eat your fruit.** Fresh, canned or frozen, they all make great snacks and a nice dessert. Dried fruit is OK, too, as long as you control the portion sizes.
- **Get support.** Get support from your family and friends to stay on track with your weight loss. How about creating your own biggest losers contest and invite others to join? Support goes a long way with weight loss.
- **Celebrate your success!** Give yourself a pat on the back and more as you continue to lose weight. It's no easy task. As you reach a weight loss goal, how about something special to reward yourself? Make it something that you really can enjoy like a new outfit, season tickets for your favorite sport or a special vacation. You decide what it is and write it down with your goal.

For more information about making healthy choices, visit Ask the Dietitian on <http://www.commissaries.com> and post your questions on the DeCA Dietitian Forum. Be sure to look for other useful information in the Dietitian's Voice archive. Sign up with the DeCA Dietitian on [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) and get messages sent to your cell phone today. For delicious

recipes, check out Kay's Kitchen. And to enjoy all your commissary has to offer, sign up for the *Commissary Connection*.

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**About DeCA:** *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$3,300 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*