



In this newsletter, we will discuss the importance of managing expectations and how it can help you set and work towards your weight management goals.

How to set realistic weight management goals

Recognizing that you have concerns about your weight and starting the conversation with your healthcare professional are important first steps towards managing your weight. Yet many people unfairly blame themselves for the excess weight they carry and don't realize that it is not always their fault.

As mentioned in our previous newsletter, establishing your weight history allows you to identify your strengths, weaknesses, and events that may have caused your weight to change. This information can help you and your healthcare team set realistic and achievable goals.

The importance of realistic expectations

Weight management is a long-term journey, so we can't expect change to happen overnight. It is best to try to lose weight slowly so that we can maintain it in the long term. Having realistic expectations while managing your weight can help you stay motivated and allows you to celebrate the small milestones you reach along the way.

Below are a few tips that can help you set realistic goals and manage your expectations:



1. Try to set goals around existing behaviours and values

When setting new goals, try to explore possibilities for making healthier choices in your existing daily routine. It is easier to maintain small changes to your current habits than making big changes all at once, and they will likely be more effective in the long run. Also, try choosing goals that are supported by your existing values, for example, wanting to be healthy enough to play with your kids. This strategy can help remind you of why you started to make changes in the first place.



2. Test and adjust your expectations

When starting something new, it is common to experience minor setbacks. It is important not to dwell on them but use them to understand what works for you and what doesn't. We sometimes need to change or adjust our expectations along the way to help us reach our goals. For example, you may want to start going for a walk every morning before work, but then realize you don't have enough time. You can use this as a learning experience and try something different, such as taking the stairs at work instead of using the elevator.



3. Set short-term goals

Taking small steps towards managing your weight can help prevent you from getting overwhelmed. Don't try to make big dramatic changes from the start. Instead, try to make small manageable changes. For example, when you are first starting to exercise, 10 minutes may be enough, but over time, you can build on that.

There are many factors that contribute to obesity, some of which are out of our control. When setting goals and expectations for weight management, it is important to focus on the things that you can change.

Setting goals that work for you

Setting goals that help us make changes to our behaviour are often more effective than setting goals that are based on numbers on the scale. Evaluating your success based on what you are able to accomplish each day is more likely to help you in the long term. The SMART goal-setting method can be helpful in identifying weight management goals.¹

S

SPECIFIC:

Sometimes it is not enough to say, "I want to improve how I am managing my weight." It is important to give yourself a clear and specific goal that you can work towards. For example, try choosing 1 or 2 behavioural changes and focus on incorporating them into your daily routine.

M

MEASURABLE:

Decide on a method of tracking your progress and recording when you have reached your goals. For example, try using a calendar or keeping a journal to help you track your progress.

A

ACHIEVABLE:

Before you begin, think about how confident you are in your ability to maintain the changes. Ensure that the changes you want to make aren't too far off from your current behaviours so that they are realistic for you.

R

REWARDING:

Identify goals that are relevant and important to you. Setting goals that are meaningful to you will help keep you motivated.

T

TIMELY:

Set short-term goals and check on your progress often to keep yourself on track. Setting small goals with shorter timelines can be less overwhelming than setting big, long-term goals. Once you achieve a smaller goal, you can make new short-term goals to build on the previous ones.

You can use SMART goals to help you and your healthcare professional identify the goals that are right for you.

Hear from someone living with obesity

"I think you have to be happy with what you see before you can get yourself back to where you should be."

While working towards your weight management goals, you may face obstacles and minor setbacks along the way. It is important to stay positive and focused on why you started making these changes in the first place. Keep your family, friends, and healthcare team updated on your progress so that they can help you stay motivated to reach your next goal!

Want to learn more?

For additional information about setting realistic weight management goals for you or someone you care about:



Visit Obesity Canada



Speak with your healthcare professional



Contact your human resources department



We want to hear from you!

Email us at NNCICustomerCare@novonordisk.com to share your ideas and comments.

In the next newsletter, we will discuss weight management resources you can explore, and how to access them.

Reference: 1. Obesity Canada. 5As of Obesity Management. Available at: www.obesitycanada.ca. Retrieved November, 2018.