

Preventing Weight Gain

Antipsychotic medication and certain other medications may lead to weight gain in some individuals.

Not everybody on these medications will experience weight gain. But it is important to watch out for any increase in weight so that it can be dealt with right away if it does occur. A significant increase in weight is associated with other medical problems such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes. This cluster of symptoms is referred to as “metabolic syndrome”.

Your EPI Psychiatrist will monitor for weight gain and any medical problems that may result by taking your weight, measuring blood pressure and ordering lab tests. If you notice that you are gaining weight, report this to your EPI Psychiatrist and Clinician the next time you see them.

Eating well and getting regular exercise will help prevent weight gain from medication and will also help keep you in good physical shape. It will also help improve your mood and how you feel about yourself.

If you would like to lose weight or get into better shape, talk with your EPI Psychiatrist and Clinician about this. They can help you develop specific plans to achieve your goals.

Tips about diet and exercise.

Don't go on a strict diet to lose weight – you may lose weight in the short term but you will gain it all back (and perhaps even more).

Eat a balanced diet - diets that emphasize eating a lot of just one type of food are not healthy. You need to have a mix of grains, vegetables, fruits, dairy and protein every day.

If you need a snack, then reach for a piece of fruit or some cut veggies instead of a bag of potato chips or chocolate bar.

Choose activities you enjoy for exercise - this helps ensure that you will keep doing it.

Exercise with a friend – this makes exercise more fun and can help motivate you too.

Listen to music - research has shown that listening to music you enjoy while exercising increases the duration and effort of the workout.

Little things do make a difference - take the stairs instead of the elevator or walk the long way to the store.

Start exercising even just 5 minutes a day and increase the duration slowly over time.
