



Weight management is hard for many of us no matter what time of the year. For individuals with SCI, it is even harder to maintain a healthy weight and avoid putting on some extra pounds due to the reduced ability to move around. Trying to eat healthy will not only help you to maintain your weight, but it is also important for bowel/bladder management, prevention of skin breakdown, and for your overall health.

No matter what time of the year it is, there are always delicious foods to enjoy that might contribute to unwanted weight gain. Although we can all splurge from time to time, trying to maintain a healthy eating pattern and avoiding overeating is always a good practice.

To put things into perspective, consuming one cup of French fries each day for one week will cause one pound of weight gain. Listed below are some common foods to show where extra pounds and calories may be coming from:

Food	Serving Size	Calories	Pounds
Cheeseburger	1 small, 4 inch width	360	0.103
Chicken Caesar Salad	2 cups	560	0.160
Tuna Salad Wrap	1 wrap	580	0.166
Chicken Quesadilla	1 tortilla	300	0.086
Pizza with cheese only	1/8 of pie	140	0.040
French Fries	1 cup	460	0.131
Macaroni & Cheese	1 cup	360	0.103
Honey-Glazed Ham	4 ounces	230	0.066
Mashed Potatoes with Gravy	½ cup with ¼ cup gravy	170	0.049
Dinner Roll	2 rolls	220	0.063
Soda, coca-cola	2 cups	194	0.055
Apple juice, 100%	2 cups	234	0.067
Orange juice, 100%	2 cups	224	0.064
Cranberry juice, 100%	2 cups	240	0.069
Hot Chocolate	1 cup	190	0.054

Controlling portion size is one way to cut calories and curb possible weight gain. In the example above, the ham is served as a 4 oz. portion although it is not uncommon for a single serving of meat in a restaurant to be closer to 8-10 oz and for side dishes to be larger than ½ cup. Below are illustrations of common objects you can use to estimate portion size:



1 cup = Baseball



½ cup = Light bulb



1 oz or 2 tbsp = Golf ball



1 tbsp = Poker chip

For more portion guidelines and a Portion Guide, see:

http://img.webmd.com/dtmcms/live/webmd/consumer_assets/site_images/media/pdf/diet/portion-control-guide.pdf

HOW MUCH SHOULD I WEIGH?

While there are no specific weight guidelines for individuals with SCI, the general rule is to subtract 5-10% from general weight guidelines for paraplegia, and 10-15% for tetraplegia.¹

 Female Height to Weight Ratio				 Male Height to Weight Ratio			
Height	Low	Target	High	Height	Low	Target	High
4' 10"	100	115	131	5' 1"	123	134	145
4' 11"	101	117	134	5' 2"	125	137	148
5' 0"	103	120	137	5' 3"	127	139	151
5' 1"	105	122	140	5' 4"	129	142	155
5' 2"	108	125	144	5' 5"	131	145	159
5' 3"	111	128	148	5' 6"	133	148	163
5' 4"	114	133	152	5' 7"	135	151	167
5' 5"	117	136	156	5' 8"	137	154	171
5' 6"	120	140	160	5' 9"	139	157	175
5' 7"	123	143	164	5' 10"	141	160	179
5' 8"	126	146	167	5' 11"	144	164	183
5' 9"	129	150	170	6' 0"	147	167	187
5' 10"	132	153	173	6' 1"	150	171	192
5' 11"	135	156	176	6' 2"	153	175	197
6' 0"	138	159	179	6' 3"	157	179	202

Height = Feet and Inches - Weight = Pounds. © Copyright www.disabled-world.com

For example, the target weight for a 6'0" man with paraplegia is 150-158 lbs, while a 6'0" man with tetraplegia has a target weight of 142-150lbs. A 5'6" female with paraplegia's target weight is 126-133 lbs. If she has tetraplegia, it's 119-126 lbs.

DAILY CALORIE INTAKE

Depending on level of activity, people with SCI tend to need fewer calories per day. Cox et al² developed a formula to calculate caloric needs. The formula is:

- Persons with paraplegia: 27.9 calories x body weight in kg. (1 kg = 2.2 lbs)
- Persons with tetraplegia: 22.7 calories x body weight in kg.

The formula is based on your target weight. Although this formula is still being used, it has several limitations:

- The formula doesn't account for gender or age - Older people tend to need fewer calories than younger people.
- The formula doesn't account for your activity level - The more active you are, the more calories you burn and the easier it is to control weight gain.

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT TIPS

- Eat regular meals.
- Don't overeat.
- Try to find a healthy pattern and stick to it.
- Stay as active as possible.



RESOURCES

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM: For those of you who have made a commitment to do something about weight management or who are just interested in learning more about it, the University of Alabama Spinal Cord Injury Model System has designed a 12 week program specifically for individuals with spinal cord injury. The EatRight program includes a weekly workbook and a video of the topic of the week.

<http://www.uab.edu/medicine/sci/uab-scims-information/eatright-weight-management-program>

NUTRITION FACTSHEET

<http://sci-health.org/RRTC/publications/PDF/SCI-Nutrition.pdf>

REFERENCES

¹Height and Weight Ratio Chart. Disabled World - Disability News for all the Family. Available at http://www.disabled-world.com/artman/publish/height_weight.shtml#ixzz2Gv7yolpD

²Energy expenditure after spinal cord injury: an evaluation of stable rehabilitating patients. Cox SA, Weiss SM, Posuniak EA, Worthington P, Prioleau M, Heffley G. J Trauma 1985;May 25(5):419-23.



RRTC on Secondary Conditions in the Rehabilitation
of Individuals with Spinal Cord Injury



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