Overview

If you're planning to lose weight, congratulations! Before you begin, let's talk about weight-loss goals. Many people set goals that that aren't well thought out. This leads to failure. But by avoiding common pitfalls, you can set goals you can achieve.

Be specific

First, be specific. Don't set vague goals like "I'm going to eat healthier." Instead, your goal should be something like "I'm going to eat no more than 1,200 calories per day." That's a specific goal you can measure. Do the same when you set exercise goals. Plan specific activities and the times you will do them. And keep track of your progress.

Set attainable goals

Next, make sure you can actually reach your goals. Don't set a goal of walking 45 minutes every morning if you know you can't wake up and do that. Don't set a goal of using the gym three nights a week if you have a busy schedule in the evenings. This will soon lead to failure.

Be realistic

Be realistic. Most people aren't able to lose more than five or ten percent of their body weight. So keep this in mind as you begin. Trying to lose a huge amount of weight can end in frustration and disappointment.

Allow for setbacks

And finally, know that you'll have some setbacks along the way. It's OK, everyone has setbacks now and then. If you slip up and overindulge, wake up the next day and get right back to your diet. With determination and effort, you can lose weight. Talk to your doctor for more information.