

# TIPS FOR PROMOTING DIETARY CHANGES IN INDIVIDUALS WITH DOWN SYNDROME:



Individuals with Down syndrome have a higher prevalence of obesity than people in the general population.

Scientists have researched the hormone Leptin, which contributes to appetite regulation and satiety. The data shows that individuals with Down syndrome have increased Leptin levels, which correlates with higher rates of obesity.

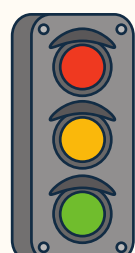
LuMind IDSC compiled a few tips to encourage your loved ones with Down syndrome to make healthier choices.

**For more healthy eating resources register for [myDSC](#), it's free!**

## USE VISUAL AIDS



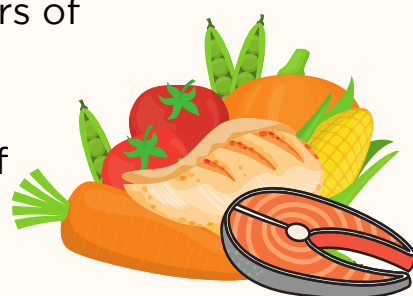
Use visual aids such as food models. For instance, take out a plate and show how much should be a protein, grains, vegetables etc. Consider buying plates that are divided into sections for the different food types (protein, grains, fruits/veggies, etc.). This encourages the individual to eat a well-balanced meal with a variety of foods.



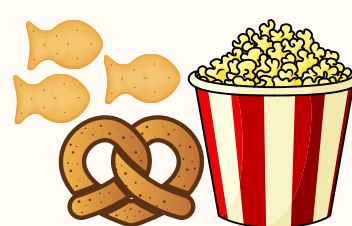
## TRY THE TRAFFIC LIGHT COLOR SYSTEM

The Advocate Medical Group, Adult Down Syndrome Center recommends following as a guide, the colors of traffic lights.

**Green:** eat every day. These are foods that contain lots of vitamins and nutrients, such as: fruits, vegetables, grilled chicken, fish, and whole grains.



**Yellow:** eat sometimes. These foods contain more sugar, salt and fat. They have fewer vitamins and nutrients. Decide with your family or caregiver how often is "sometimes". Some of these foods are: crackers, pretzels, oatmeal cookies, buttered popcorn, baked chips.



**Red:** eat on special occasions. These foods contain a lot of sugar, salt and fat. They provide little nutrition since they have few vitamins. Decide with your family or caregiver how often is a "special occasion." Some of these foods are: soda/pop, donuts, candy, fried foods, and fried chips.



## LET THE INDIVIDUAL SET THEIR OWN GOALS

Address the individual, not just the care providers. Let the individual be in control. People who set their own goals are often more successful in achieving them. Keep in mind that their goals may be different than what you think they should be, but that's okay. Some of these goals could be as simple as wanting to drink more water.



## SMALL CHANGES

Small changes make a big difference. For example, experts say that cutting back calories by even 350 calories a day, makes a big difference over time. However, it's important to remember that each person is different and the amount of food they need to eat depends on age, gender, and levels of physical activity.



## PORTION SIZE IS KEY

Portion size is key: don't deprive or restrict, or cut back high nutrition foods. Deprivation might lead to bingeing. Instead, start with smaller portion sizes. Encourage the individual to put less food on their plate so that they are not tempted to eat too much. Use smaller plates so that the same amount of food takes up more space on the plate.

