

Health Terms Glossary

abilities—The things a person is able to do, particularly the things he or she is good at.

addictive—Relating to or causing physical and mental dependence on a drug.

advertising—Calling attention to products for sale through print, video, radio or other forms of media.

advocacy—Taking planned action to have a positive effect on the physical or social environment.

aerobic—Active only in the presence of oxygen. Aerobic activities are ones that move large muscle groups and make the heart and lungs work harder.

alternative—Something done or chosen instead of something else.

analyze—To examine in detail.

anemia—Lack of iron in the blood.

anorexia nervosa—An eating disorder characterized by underweight, fear of gaining weight and a distorted body image. It usually occurs in young women, is often accompanied by amenorrhea (loss of menstrual periods), and may be life threatening.

appearance—How something or someone looks.

attractive—Having qualities that are admired or get attention.

au gratin—Cooked with a crust of crumbs and grated cheese.

average—Usual or normal.

bacteria—One-celled microscopic organisms found in living things, air, soil and water. Some are beneficial to humans, but some cause disease.

barrier—Something that blocks, hinders or gets in the way.

basted—Moistened with melted butter, drippings, etc., while being cooked.

beverage—Any liquid for drinking.

binge eating—Consuming a large amount of food in a short time.

body image—The way people view their bodies, including size, weight and how attractive they are, and how they believe others view their bodies.

body language—The gestures, facial expressions and other physical clues that go with and can reinforce a verbal message; what a person is saying nonverbally with his or her body.

body mass index (BMI)—A measure of healthy weight, overweight and obesity based on the number of kilograms per square meter. It can be calculated by: (1) multiplying weight in pounds by 704; (2) squaring height in inches; (3) dividing the result of step 1 by the result of step 2. For adults, a BMI under 25 is healthy; 25–29.9 is overweight; and 30 or above is obese. For children and youth, a BMI at or over the 95th percentile is considered overweight.

broiled—Cooked on a grill or rack by a heat source from above.

bulimia nervosa—An eating disorder that involves repeated, secret bouts of binge eating followed by purging (vomiting, fasting, use of laxatives or diuretics) or vigorous exercise in order to prevent weight gain.

calorie—A unit for measuring the energy produced by food when it is metabolized in the body.

campaign—A series of planned actions, as for electing a candidate or achieving some other result.

cancer—A disease that occurs when the body's cells grow in an out-of-control way.

carbohydrate—A nutrient composed of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen that provides the body's preferred form of energy.

cardiorespiratory—Relating to or involving the heart and lungs.

celebrity—A famous person.

characteristic—Trait or quality.

cholesterol—A waxy fat made by the body and an essential part of cell membranes; high levels in the blood can lead to heart disease.

chronic disease—An illness that lasts a long time or recurs often; can be treated but not cured.

climate—The prevailing weather conditions of a place.

commercial—An audio or visual advertisement for a product.

complex carbohydrates—Starch, glycogen and dietary fiber.

compulsive—Feeling compelled or forced, with no sense of control.

consequence—The result or outcome of an action or event.

constipation—Abnormally delayed or infrequent bowel movements that are hardened and dry.

contaminated—Infected by germs, such as bacteria; made unfit for use.

cool down—To slow the level of physical activity gradually to allow the heart and breathing to return to normal levels, to let the muscles recover, and to avoid other problems that can occur if activity is stopped suddenly.

core body temperature—Temperature inside the body, as opposed to the temperature of the outer areas.

counteract—To act in opposition to or neutralize the effect of something.

culture—The beliefs, behaviors, arts and social structures that people in a society learn, share and pass on to future generations.

dehydrated—Lacking adequate fluid in the body.

dehydration—Loss of fluid in the body.

diabetes (diabetes mellitus)—A chronic metabolic disorder in which the body's ability to use carbohydrates is impaired, while use of fats and protein is enhanced. A risk factor for cardiovascular disease, diabetes is linked with obesity and high blood pressure. Type 1 requires a person to take insulin, while type 2 may be controlled by diet.

diarrhea—Abnormally frequent and watery bowel movements.

diet—The overall combination of food and drink a person consumes over time.

dietary fiber— See *fiber*.

dieting—A short-term way to lose weight.

diuretic—A substance or drug that increases the body's elimination of fluids.

eating disorder—A psychological illness characterized by disturbances in eating behavior.

endurance—The ability of muscles to keep doing an activity.

esophagus—The tube that carries food from the mouth to the stomach.

excessive—To an extreme degree, much more than is needed.

expiration date—The date something ends; the date after which a product may begin to spoil.

external—Coming from the outside world.

fad diet—A way of eating that suddenly becomes popular for a period of time.

fast—To eat sparingly or go without food.

fat—A nutrient that is the body's second major source of energy and the preferred means of storing energy.

fiber—Plant food components, including plant cell walls, pectins, gums and brans, that the body cannot digest.

fitness—A combination of qualities that allow an individual to meet the physical demands of life.

flexibility—The ability of joints to move through a full range of motion.

food-borne illness—Illness caused by food that has been spoiled by harmful bacteria, toxins, parasites, viruses or chemicals.

food group—A collection of foods that share similar nutritional properties or biological classifications. Nutrition guides recommend daily servings of each food group for a healthy diet.

fortified—Enriched with added nutrients.

fructose—The sugar in sweet fruits and honey.

- genes**—The structures that pass inherited characteristics from parents to offspring.
- germ**—Any disease-carrying organism, such as bacteria.
- glucose**—Form of sugar used as the body's basic energy source; all carbohydrates the body can digest are eventually turned into glucose in the body.
- glycogen**—The main form in which carbohydrates are stored in the body.
- goal setting**—Specifying an end or result a person tries to achieve; should be specific, realistic and measurable.
- gram**—The basic unit of mass and weight in the metric system, equal to about 1/28 of an ounce.
- grilled**—Cooked on a grill over a heat source.
- guidelines**—Principles or rules that help determine a course of action.
- heart disease**—A group of problems that occur when the heart and blood vessels aren't working the way they should.
- heart rate**—The number of times the heart beats in a set period of time.
- heatstroke**—A failure of the body's heat-control mechanisms, caused by too much exposure to heat.
- high blood pressure**—Pressure of the blood against the blood vessel walls that is higher than normal.
- hollandaise**—A creamy sauce made of butter, egg yolks, lemon juice and other ingredients.
- hormone**—A chemical secreted by a gland or the brain that signals parts of the body to grow and change.
- hydrated**—Being supplied with enough water or fluid.
- hypothermia**—Lower than normal body temperature.
- influence**—To have an effect on or change someone's thoughts, beliefs, or behaviors.
- intake**—Taking in; the amount taken in.
- intense**—Very strong; characterized by much action, strong emotion, etc.
- intensity**—A measure of the level of effort required to perform an activity.
- internal**—Coming from inside a person.
- internal organ**—A part inside the body that performs a specific function.
- irrational**—Not based on facts or reason.
- lanugo**—A downy growth of soft hair on the body; symptom of anorexia.
- laxative**—A substance or drug that loosens the bowels to cause bowel movements.
- lean**—Containing little or no fat.

measurable—Able to be measured or appraised.

media—All the various means of communication used to inform or influence people; includes advertising, newspapers, magazines, music, music videos, TV shows, computer games and websites.

metabolic rate—The amount of energy released and used from food consumed per unit of time.

metabolism—The process by which the body uses food to release energy and uses the energy to build and repair body tissues.

milligram—One thousandth of a gram.

minerals—Inorganic compounds that play a role in human health.

misperception—An incorrect or false understanding.

moderate—Within reasonable limits; of medium quality, amount, etc.

moderation—Avoidance of extremes.

monitor—To keep track of the condition or progress of something.

muscle tone—Normal, healthy condition of muscles.

negative—Destructive or disruptive.

negative body image—A negative view or dislike of one's body and how it looks.

nutrients—Substances living things need to take in from the environment to live and grow. For the human body these are water, carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins and minerals.

nutrition—The study of diet and health.

nutritionist—A specialist in diet and health.

osteoporosis—A condition that results from a decline in bone mineral content, which makes bones more likely to break.

peers—People of the same age or close in age who are similar in many ways.

physical activity—Bodily movement that greatly increases energy use.

physical fitness—A set of attributes that add to a person's overall health and physical capability. Some are skill-related (such as balance, agility and speed). Others are health-related (such as cardiorespiratory endurance).

positive—Helpful, constructive or healthy.

positive body image—A positive view, liking or acceptance of one's body and how it looks.

poultry—Domestic fowl, such as chickens, turkeys and ducks.

pressure line—Something said to compel or urge someone to do something.

priorities—Things that are put ahead of other things in order of importance; things given attention before other things.

processed foods—Foods that have been changed from their natural state to make them safer or more convenient.

processed sugar—Sugar usually made from sugar cane or beets that is refined so that it has a regular texture and flavor.

protein—A nutrient made up of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen, whose major function is the growth, maintenance and repair of body tissues.

puberty—Stage of life when the body changes and the reproductive system matures.

purge—To get rid of something, specifically, to attempt to rid the body of food; includes self-induced vomiting and laxative or diuretic abuse.

range of motion—The full distance and direction a joint can move.

realistic—Actually possible, practical.

recommended—Suggested or advised.

refined grain—Grain that has been milled or processed to remove the bran (outer husk) and germ (part that can grow into a new plant) to give it a finer texture.

registered dietitian—A person trained in the study of diet and health who has passed an exam and fulfilled certain requirements.

reliable—Able to be relied upon, dependable.

resisting pressure—Not giving in to the influence or demands of someone else.

responsibilities—The things a person has a duty toward or has made a commitment to do.

roleplay—An activity in which participants respond to a sample situation and act out roles to practice skills such as resisting pressure or resolving conflict.

saturated fat—A type of fat, usually found in animal sources, that is solid at room temperature. Diets high in saturated fat are linked to greater risk of developing heart disease.

scalloped—Baked with a milk sauce and bread crumbs.

sedentary—Inactive.

self-starvation—Severely restricting calories or depriving oneself of food.

sodium—An alkaline chemical element; in relation to food, usually refers to salts.

specific—Clearly and exactly presented or stated.

strength—The ability of muscle to exert force.

strengthen—To make stronger.

stress—Mental or physical tension or pressure.

sucrose—Sugar taken from sugar cane or sugar beets.

supplement—Something, such as vitamins or herbs, added to the diet, often in the form of a pill or powder.

symptom—A condition or behavior that indicates the existence of a particular disease.

technique—A method of doing something, such as advertising a product.

toxin—A poisonous compound that causes disease.

trans fat—A fat formed by adding hydrogen to liquid fat to make it solid at room temperature; developed to make shipping and storage of foods easier. Trans fats are unhealthy and are linked to increased blood cholesterol levels.

trustworthy—Able to be trusted; worthy of confidence.

type 2 diabetes—A chronic disorder in which the body's use of carbohydrates is impaired, which leads to a deficiency of the hormone insulin. Type 2 diabetes used to be called "adult onset diabetes," but is being seen more often in children and teens. It can often be controlled by diet.

unsaturated fat—Type of fat that doesn't raise blood cholesterol levels.

utensils—Tools or containers, especially those used in the kitchen, such as spoons, forks, knives, etc.

vigorous—Done forcefully or energetically.

virus—An organism formed of genes surrounded by a protein coating; cannot reproduce itself but must invade a living cell to replicate.

vitamins—Organic substances either made by the body or found in foods. Small amounts are essential for the regulation of metabolism and normal growth and functioning of the body.

warm up—To do some gentle movements before physical activity to allow breathing and heart rate to rise gradually and prepare the muscles to use energy efficiently.

weight management—Keeping the body weight at a healthy level using healthy means.