Diets don’t work. Lifestyle change is the key to weight-loss success.

Magazines and weight management groups or programs often mention keeping a diary of what you eat and how much you exercise. If so, you may be thinking:

- Writing down what and when I eat is just too time-consuming.
- I don’t have time to look up the calories and fat grams in every thing I eat.
- I don’t have time to exercise, so I can’t write it down.

Did you know that research shows that people who successfully lose weight and keep it off use food and activity logs? Why do you think that is? Eating and activity are lifestyle habits that we do repeatedly so many times that they can be done without thinking.

With that thought in mind, perhaps you are considering:

- To change a habit, I need to be able to recognize it. So, if I take the time to write it down, I will become conscious of my actions.
- Writing down what I am eating and how active I am may require time, but it is time for me. I am important, and I am investing time that will benefit me for the rest of my life.
Logging may not become a daily habit, but it can support your weight management efforts if done with some regularity. It helps you recognize changes in your lifestyle and new habits that may develop. This offers the opportunity to make adjustments and keep yourself on track to your goals. You may choose to keep a log every day for a month or two to get started. Then you may choose to check on yourself regularly by logging two days a week or two to four days a month.

There are many logging tools available. Paper and pencil are traditional, but UPMC Health Plan also offers online tools. Log in to MyHealth OnLine at upmchealthplan.com and click on the MyTools section to find the MyHealth Trackers. The MyHealth Trackers enable you to log your weight, food intake, and activity 24/7. For convenience, you can also print food and activity logs to use when you are not in front of a computer.