# Stages of Change: A Model for Nutrition Counseling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Behavior Goals</th>
<th>Educational Strategies</th>
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</table>
| Precontemplation      | • Is unaware of problem and hasn’t thought about change, or not interested in change.  
• Has no intention of taking action within the next 6 months. | • Increase awareness of need for change.  
• Personalize information on risks and benefits.  
• Reduce fears associated with having to change behavior (costs are too high, etc.). | • Create supportive climate for change.  
• Discuss personal aspects and health consequences of poor eating or sedentary behavior.  
• Assess knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs.  
• Build on existing knowledge.  
• Relate to benefits loved ones will receive.  
• Focus on the impact the negative behavior has on loved ones. |
| Contemplation          | • Is interested in taking action, but not yet able to commit to it.         | • Increase motivation and confidence to perform the new behavior.  
• Reduce fears associated with having to change behavior. | • Identify problematic behaviors.  
• Prioritize behaviors to change.  
• Discuss motivation.  
• Identify barriers to change and possible solutions.  
• Suggest small, achievable steps to make a change.  
• Focus on benefits the change will have on loved ones. |
| Preparation            | • Intends to take action soon and has taken some behavioral steps in this direction.  
• Lacks self-efficacy to take steps necessary for long lasting change. | • Resolution of ambivalence  
• Firm commitment  
• Initiate change  
• Increase self-efficacy through gradually increasing more difficult tasks. | • Assist in developing a concrete action plan.  
• Encourage initial small steps to change.  
• Discuss earlier attempts to change and ways to succeed.  
• Elicit support from family and friends. |
| Action                 | • Has changed overt behavior for less than 6 months.  
• Needs skills for long-term adherence. | • Commit to change | • Reinforce decision.  
• Reinforce self-confidence.  
• Assist with self-monitoring, feedback, problem solving, social support, and reinforcement.  
• Discuss relapse and coping strategies. |
| Maintenance            | • Has changed overt behavior for more than 6 months. | • Reinforce commitment and continue changes/new behaviors. | • Plan follow-up to support changes.  
• Help prevent relapse.  
• Assist in coping, reminding, finding alternatives, and avoiding slips/relapses. |