



Keep a Food Diary

CHALLENGE
Record what you eat for a month.

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read "Keep a Food Diary."
2. To complete this Challenge, record what you eat on at least 22 days this month.
3. Keep records of your completed challenge, in case your organization requires documentation.

When Georgia resident Krystie Faulkner was looking through her photos from the holidays, she was bothered by what she saw. At 33 years old, she weighed 275 pounds. And when she mistook herself for her aging mother in those family photos, she knew right then she wanted to improve her diet and lose weight.

"The first step that I took to change my life was really just watching what I ate for a day and writing every single thing down," Krystie says. "I thought that if I wrote it down, I could look at what I was doing and see where I could change things."

Keeping a food diary helped her realize how often she ate empty-calorie foods like cakes and cookies and loaded up on second servings and extra cheese. And it motivated her to change. She's lost 120 pounds since she started keeping a food diary three years ago. She even chronicled her weight loss on YouTube.com and her blog.

Can you remember what you ate for breakfast, lunch, and dinner yesterday? And what about the snacks you had in between meals? Do you really know what you're eating, how much, and how often? Studies have shown that keeping a food diary can help you cut calories, eat healthier, and lose weight.

It can also motivate you to adopt other healthy behaviors. It wasn't long after Krystie began keeping a food journal that she started exercising regularly. Then she finished a 5K race. And she's encouraging others along the way. If you're ready to make some healthy changes and learn the truth about your diet, keep a food diary every day this month.

Food Diary Doubles Weight Loss

About 70 percent of Americans are overweight or obese. If you're on the heavy side, you may have considered a diet, diet pill, or program to help you lose weight. However, recent research suggests one of the best tools for weight loss is a food diary.

In a recent study, dieters who wrote down everything they ate lost twice as much weight as those who didn't.

About 1,700 overweight or obese adults were part of the study. Their average weight was 212 pounds in the beginning. During the 20-week study, the dieters who kept a food diary six or seven days a week lost an average of 18 pounds. Those who did not keep a food diary only lost an average of 9 pounds in the same amount of time.



Keeping a food diary can help you keep your calories in check. By cutting about 500 calories a day from your diet, you could lose one to two pounds a week. This might also lower your risk for heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, and diabetes. You could also use a food diary to identify problem eating patterns or to keep track of your salt intake.

Take the Healthy Eating Quiz

How much do you really know about your eating habits? Take the Healthy Eating Quiz to find out.

Y N Don't Know

- I know how many calories I consume each day.
- I eat a healthy amount of fruits and vegetables daily.
- I eat less than 2,300 mg of sodium per day.
- I always drink an adequate amount of water.
- I know how many calories I should consume for a healthy weight.

If you answered **No** or **Don't Know** to any of these statements, you could benefit from keeping a food diary. When you know what you're eating, you can make adjustments in your diet that can help you lose weight, reduce your risk for chronic diseases, and improve your health.



Keep a Food Diary

CHALLENGE
Record what you eat for a month.

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Record the number of days you keep a food diary.
3. At the end of the month, total the number of days you kept a record of what you ate. To complete the Challenge, you must meet the goal on at least 22 days out of the month. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH: _____							HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUN.	MON.	TUE.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.	Weight & weekly summary
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	
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_____ Number of days this month I kept a food diary

_____ Number of days this month I got 30+ minutes of physical activity such as brisk walking or biking

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____

