



# Keys to Using a Food Journal

## Get the benefits from writing it down

Improving your diet or eating healthier is a great goal for a new year. But often it is easier said than done. Perhaps you don't need to lose weight, but need to improve the quality of your food choices. Maybe you are trying to set a good example for your children? Whatever the reason, this quarters wellness newsletter is focusing on improving your diet to improve your health. Keep the newsletter handy, maybe putting a copy on your refrigerator or with your grocery list. Refer back to it whenever you need some tips. As always, you may call us at Doctors Direct for support and guidance.

### Take control of your risk!

- Stay away from tobacco
- Stay at a healthy weight
- Get moving with regular physical activity
- Eat healthy with plenty of fruits and vegetables
- Limit how much alcohol you drink (if you drink at all)
- Protect your skin
- Know yourself, your family history and your risks.
- Have regular check ups and cancer screening tests.

### Super Foods

1. Water instead of sweetened soda
2. Whole grains: brown rice, quinoa, whole wheat, oats, rye
3. Vegetables, fresh and steamed, the least processed the better
4. Fruits: with so many varieties out there, just remember to wash the skin well before slicing or biting into it
5. Fish instead of red meat, the fewer servings of red meat, the better

- ⇒ Be Aware of what you eat and drink. Keep a food journal for two weeks. Don't forget to write down every bite. Its more than about the calories. You might be surprised at how many calories are eaten mindlessly in a day. Often, mindless calories are empty calories.
- ⇒ Look for patterns in your food journal. Are you eating breakfast? Does it tide you over to lunch or are you getting hungry before lunch time? It could be as simple as adding protein to the meal. Do you find your energy level lagging at the end of the day? Are you taking in enough calories to maintain energy with good nutrition? Fast food does not make you feel good because it has high fat, high sodium, low fiber and low nutrient.

### Sample Food Journal

Time	Food	Mood	Activity	Meal/Snack
7:30 am	Cinn. Raisin toast 1 slice	Sleepy, just woke up	Have to take meds with food	breakfast
8:00	Oatmeal 1 cup coffee 2 Tbs creamer	Invigorated	Sitting at desk reading email	breakfast
10:30 am	Skinny cow chocolate clusters	Bored, spreadsheets do not keep my interest	Tallying up numbers on spreadsheet	snack

### Using the food journal

- ⇒ Review your foods, did you skip any meals?
- ⇒ Were there meals where you ate more than your normal? Look at the meals in the day prior to this. Did that meal have an adequate balance of fat/protein/ fiber? If you are starving yourself all day, you will make up for those calories elsewhere. The trick is to make sure each meal is balanced and satisfying.
- ⇒ Did you have any snacks or meals simply because you were bored, upset or expected to? Mindless eating is wasted calories. Make sure that every time you eat, you get the most out of it. It should be satisfying on all levels.
- ⇒ Going hand in hand with mindless eating, is there a new activity that can be tried during those times of the day when boredom hits? Maybe a new hobby?

*Keeping You Healthy is our Number One Priority!*

## Learning from the Emerging Pattern

Assessing the Quality of the food you eat:

### How many servings ?

1. Fruits
2. Vegetables
3. Whole grains
4. Low fat proteins
5. Fat free or low fat dairy

What foods can be improved? Can you replace any foods with fruits, vegetables, or fat free dairy? For example, baked kale chips to replace potato chips, fat free chocolate pudding or yogurt for sugary snacks, grilled chicken breast for breaded and fried pork.

### How are your foods prepared?

1. Anything breaded
2. Fried
3. Buttery cheesy sauces
4. Creamed
5. Crispy
6. Glazed

Finding new ways to prepare or purchase favorites can be a challenge, but you are up to it! Breading can be removed or even replaced with whole grain alternatives. Fried foods can be baked or grilled, and cheese sauces can be made with lower fat full flavored substitutes.

### How big are your portions?

1. 1 slice of bread
2. 1/4 of a regular bagel
3. Cup of pasta or rice
4. 3 ounces of meat

By reducing the amount of your portions, you can painlessly reduce your overall calorie intake. Here are some simple swaps for portion control.

1. Sandwich thins replace 2 slices of bread
2. Mini bagels
3. Salad plates for meals
4. Cut meat into halves prior to cooking

Remember, keep a food journal. Look for patterns. Replace empty calories with super foods or fruits and veggies. Replace simple carbohydrates like white bread with whole grain wherever possible. Prepare foods with methods that reduce calories and fat. Use portion control to keep it simple. Good nutrition is within your grasp!