

Planning Meals

When trying to lose weight, we may be tempted to skip meals as a way of reducing calories. This often backfires, however, because the resulting hunger can lead us to eat larger quantities or higher fat and calorie content. Many times, the end result is that we eat more fat and calories than we would have with regular meals.

In addition, your bodies need a certain amount of calories and nutrients each day in order to work properly. Skipping meals may actually work *against* your body and lead to weight gain.

For many people, the best approach is to eat four to five smaller meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner, and one or two snacks) throughout the day that include a variety of healthy, low-fat, and low-calorie foods.

When planning meals, focus on reducing fats and refined sugars (like those found in sweets).

Remember that fat contains more than twice the calories as there are in the same amount of sugar, starch, or protein, and somewhat more than alcohol.

	Fat	Carbohydrates	Proteins	Alcohol
Calories/gram*	9	4	4	7

*A gram is a unit of weight. A paper clip weighs about one gram.

Build a Better Breakfast

Do you usually eat in the morning?

- If yes, what do you usually eat? When? Where?
- If no, what are your reasons?



How does your morning eating pattern vary on weekends?

Do you skip breakfast and overeat at night?

- If so, what food(s) could you eat less often at night? (include calories and fat grams)
- What food(s) could you start eating in the morning? (include calories and fat grams)

Did you know...?

- Breakfast can take less than five minutes to make.
- People who eat breakfast tend to make healthier food choices during the day.
- Breakfast eaters tend to be in a better mood, have more energy, and do better on memory tasks.
- People who *don't* eat breakfast tend to overeat during the day, especially at night. So the next morning, they are less hungry and are less likely to eat breakfast. Vicious cycle!

Planning a Morning Meal

Low-fat Protein	Choose skim or 1% milk or soymilk, nonfat or low-fat yogurt (either plain or sugar-free). Try nonfat or low-fat cottage cheese or an egg (hard boiled, poached, or scrambled with cooking spray) or egg substitute.
Fruit	Choose fresh fruit, or frozen or canned fruits packed in water or juice (not heavy syrup).
Cereal	Choose whole grain cereals that are low in sugar. Avoid “frosted” or sweetened cereals, granolas, and cereals with nuts.
Bread or Oatmeal	Try whole grain toast or an English muffin. Top with nonfat cream cheese, jam, jelly, or all-fruit spread. Make oatmeal and top with fresh fruit or nonfat yogurt. Avoid croissants, biscuits, doughnuts, and most muffins.
Pancakes	Top with a small amount of low-fat margarine or reduced-calorie syrup, fresh fruit, or fruit purees like applesauce.
Potatoes	Make your own home fries with pan spray instead of oil. Heat a leftover baked potato in the microwave. Top with nonfat sour cream.
Leftovers	Use the microwave to reheat leftovers from last night’s dinner. Grilled chicken, brown rice, whole wheat pasta, or lean beef can be just as delicious at breakfast.
Avoid these foods, or eat in smaller quantities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Bacon➤ Sausage➤ Sugar, honey, regular syrup➤ Margarine, butter➤ Whole or 2% milk, cream, regular sweetened yogurt➤ Pastries, coffeecake, doughnuts	

My Best Breakfast

Look through your completed “Food and Activity Trackers”. Find some examples of healthy breakfasts. If you don’t have your Trackers, think back to healthy breakfasts you have eaten in the past.

How many fat grams and calories at breakfast are best for you?

- Fat gram goal for breakfast:
- Calorie goal for breakfast:

Use the examples to build three “standard” breakfast menus for yourself.



Menu 1	
Menu 2	
Menu 3	

Build a Better Main Meal

For the main meal, plan the food around lean protein and whole grains. Use little to no fat during the preparation. Add plenty of vegetables.

Low-fat protein	Include low-fat cuts of meat, poultry or fish, cooked without fat. Serve beans or soy-based products, such as tofu, more often. Make an omelet and add fresh vegetables.
Pasta	Top spaghetti with a low-fatmeat sauce and steamed vegetables. Make lasagna with low-fat cheese and a layer of spinach or broccoli.
Rice, other grains	Serve brown rice with stir-fried vegetables and lean chicken, pork, or tofu. Add rice to vegetable soup or chili. Experiment with whole grains like barley, couscous, wild rice, millet, quinoa, kasha, and bulgur.
Bread, tortillas	Make pita bread pizzas topped with vegetables and low-fat cheese. Fill tortillas with cooked chicken, steamed vegetables, rice, and salsa. Sandwiches can be a main meal, too (e.g., grilled chicken, hot turkey). So can breakfast foods (e.g., pancakes with low-fat spread, breakfast burrito with eggs, vegetables, and low-fat cheese).
Potatoes	Top baked potatoes with steamed vegetables and nonfat sour cream. Make a delicious stew with lean beef and plenty of potatoes, carrots, and onions.
<p>Serve fruit as a side dish or for dessert.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Slice several kinds of fresh or canned fruit (without syrup) into an eye-catching bowl. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> As a topping, try a small amount of sherbet, sorbet, or low-fat, sugar-free yogurt. 	

My Best Main Meal

Look through your completed “Food and Activity Trackers”. Find some examples of healthy main meals. If you don’t have your Trackers, think back to healthy main meals you have eaten in the past.

How many fat grams and calories at main meals are best for you?

- Fat gram goal for main meal:

- Calorie goal for main meal:

Use the examples to build three “standard” main meal menus for yourself.

Menu 1	
Menu 2	
Menu 3	

Planning Better Snacks

To improve your snack choices, make a plan.

A snack you eat often	Calories/fat grams per serving	Where and when you usually eat the snack
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

For many people, **unplanned snacks** are often triggered by one or more of the following. Check the triggers (cues) that apply to you:

- Being too hungry
- Being tired or overworked
- Feeling stressed, anxious, bored, or angry
- Seeing or smelling food, or seeing others eating
- Doing certain things or being in certain places (e.g., watching TV)
- Celebrating during holidays or at family gatherings
- Other: _____

Satisfying Snacks

Crunchy Snacks

- 1 serving fresh fruit (½ - 1 cup or 1 medium) 35-80 calories, 0 g fat
- Raw vegetables (½ - 1 cup or 1 medium) less than 50 calories, 0 g fat
- 6 animal crackers 85 calories, 2 g fat
- 1 sheet graham crackers 65 calories, 2 g fat

Salty Snacks

- 3 cups popcorn, microwave, light 60 calories, 3 g fat
- 4 large or 8 small pretzel twists 55 calories, 0 g fat
- 10 bite-size baked tortilla chips 55 calories, ½ g fat
- 8 baked potato chips 85 calories, 1 g fat

Chewy Snacks

- 4 halves dried apricots 40 calories, 0 g fat
- ½ English muffin 68 calories, 1 g fat
- ½ Bagel 75 calories, 1 g fat

Sweet Snacks

- ½ cup gelatin 80 calories, 0 g fat
- ½ cup sugar-free gelatin 8 calories, 0 g fat
- Two 8-inch pieces licorice 80 calories, 0 g fat
- 10 gumdrops or gummy bears 85 calories, 0 g fat
- 5 vanilla wafers 90 calories, 5 g fat
- 3 ginger snaps 90 calories, 3 g fat

Chocolate Snacks

- ½ cup fat-free chocolate pudding 100 calories, 0 g fat
- 1 fudge popsicle 60 calories, 1 g fat
- ½ cup chocolate nonfat milk 75 calories, 0 g fat

Smooth or Frozen Snacks

- ½ cup applesauce, unsweetened 50 calories, 0 g fat
- 6 oz. nonfat sugar-free yogurt 70 calories, 0 g fat
- 1 frozen fruit juice bar 70 calories, 0 g fat
- ½ cup nonfat frozen yogurt 95 calories, 0 g fat
- One 2oz. popsicle 45 calories, 0 g fat

My Best Snacks

Look through your completed “Food and Activity Trackers”. Find some examples of healthy snacks. If you don’t have your Trackers, think back to healthy snacks you have eaten in the past.

How many fat grams and calories for snacks are best for you?

- Fat gram goal for snacks:

- Calorie goal for snacks:

Use the examples and the “Satisfying Snacks” list on the previous page to build seven “standard” snacks for yourself.

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	