

Food Journaling

One of the best ways to achieve successful weight loss and maintenance is to keep a food journal. It may take a few extra minutes out of your day, but if you want to see success, this is the route to go. Journaling makes you more accountable for your actions. Journaling can also help your Dietitian pinpoint issues with food choices and also help you with planning your meal patterns. It's also beneficial in identifying behavior changes that need to be made, like trigger foods and emotional eating trends.

There are two common types of journaling used:

- Manual journaling
- Online journaling

Examples of manual journaling would be:

- "Diet Minder" commercial spiral-bound food journal (available on Amazon)
- loose journal sheets
- notebook

Online journaling with your smartphone or computer is becoming very popular as it greatly simplifies the process, allowing for easy entry of many foods simply by scanning a barcode. If this sounds interesting to you, try out these apps:

- CurryCare app (integrated scale and tracker/iOS & Android) - see LoseWeightCincy.com/CurryCare for more info
- www.myfitnesspal.com
- www.sparkpeople.com
- www.fitday.com

General Guidelines with food journaling:

- Record as close to meals as possible. Avoid waiting until the end of the day and relying upon your memory to recall exactly what you ate and drank during the day.
- Accurately record portion sizes.
- Record EVERY morsel, no matter how big or small...nibbles and sips add up.
- Even when in a maintenance phase you are expected to journal. Sometimes when you reach a comfortable weight you may begin to fall back into old habits, which can lead to weight gain.
- If you are at a comfortable weight and are at a loss for ideas with your meal planning look back at past journals when you were doing well for ideas. These can be used as sample menus to keep you on track.

Questions to Keep in Mind

You may want to ask yourself the following questions if you think there may be something off with your diet:

- **Are you skipping meals?**
 - Skipping meals can cause increased hunger, which can lead to overeating.
- **Are you overeating at certain times in the day?**
 - Monitor if you are eating/snacking late in the day, many people struggle with boredom eating in the evening after dinner.
- **Are you eating protein based meals?**
 - Protein based meals keep you full for long periods of time, where starchy meals will have you snacking before you know it.
- **Do you attempt to overeat or eat too quickly when you wait to long to eat?**
 - Keeping meals evenly spaced will help keep your hunger in control.
- **Are you eating appropriate foods but too large of quantity?**
 - Protein, complex carbohydrates, and healthy fats are the choices you want to focus on. However, too much of a good choice can end up in weight gain.
 - Pre-portioning your foods can help eliminate this issue.
- **Do you notice any meal in particular in which you consumed too much?**
 - Journaling can help identify meals in the day where you tend to consume large amounts.
- **Are you eating a lot of combination foods?**
 - Combination foods are usually high in fat and carbs, which can lead to weight gain.
 - Examples would be casseroles, soups/stews, boxed meals, etc.

Goals for next visit:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____