

Use a food journal to stay on track

A food journal can be an effective tool when you're aiming to improve your diet. It raises awareness of what and how much you're eating, and shows where bad habits can creep in. It can also provide insight into triggers that may cause you to overeat or eat when you're not hungry.

For four weeks, track the information listed. After each week is over, examine your eating habits and consider where improvements can be made. Watch for patterns that indicate behavior that could lead to extra calories being consumed, such as not having breakfast and then eating more during the day, eating because you are bored rather than hungry, or eating mindlessly while watching TV or using your phone.

It is best to record the information right after you're done eating, while it is fresh in your mind. Another option is to do it at the end of the day. If you forget to record the information at times, don't worry. It's important that you're doing what you can to learn more about your eating habits and make improvements.

We've included a chart that you can use to get started as you record your information. You can also compile the information in a notebook, on your phone, or online. At the end of each week, consider the reflective questions.

Aim for a diet that:

- Emphasizes fruits and vegetables
- Includes more whole grains
- Includes low-fat or fat-free dairy products
- Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, and nuts
- Includes beans and legumes, such as peas and lentils
- Is low in saturated fats and trans fats
- Limits sodium and added sugars
- Controls portion sizes



