

Food diary & why it helps

The simple act of writing down what you eat can positively impact the food you choose. Research shows that you'll eat less food and higher quality food, which will promote weight loss and overall health. Keeping a food diary can benefit you in many ways because tracking what you eat and drink can keep you focused on your diet, provide motivation, increase your efficacy, and help you attain and maintain your goals. It promotes self-awareness and helps to track physical and mental reactions towards food. This helps to see what works and what doesn't. Also, it highlights certain behavioural patterns and food habits.

A food diary gives an evidence-based approach to how food affects the body, energy and mood. It is not a tool you need to use lifelong but definitely till a point when breakthrough moments happen or till the ideal eating habits and patterns are reached and you pretty much feel on auto-pilot. You will reach a point when you feel that you can monitor your food intake and choices for yourself.

HERE ARE A FEW BENEFITS OF KEEPING A FOOD DIARY:

- ✓ **Weight loss**
Keeping a food diary can help reveal the unhealthy habits that are stopping you from losing weight.
- ✓ **Detecting food intolerances**
Writing down what you eat and how you feel afterwards can help you realize what foods your body reacts negatively towards. If you feel bloated and nauseous after eating certain foods containing gluten, nuts, monosodium glutamate (MSG) & preservatives then you may be intolerant or sensitive to these foods.
- ✓ **Better nutrition**
Keeping a food diary will allow you to analyze what foods you are not eating enough of, or which ones you're eating too much. It helps you plan on meals that are balanced with healthy proportions of carbohydrates, protein and fat as well as sufficient quantities of fruits and vegetables. You can then easily make changes to your meal composition.
- ✓ **Identifying triggers to unhealthy eating**
It can be beneficial to jot down your location, time of day, and mood when keeping a food diary. Keeping track of these things can reveal how stress, work, or certain people affect your food choices.

HERE ARE MORE TIPS FOR KEEPING A SUCCESSFUL FOOD DIARY:

- Write down the food or beverage as soon as you consume it. Don't wait until the end of the day because your recollection is likely to be less accurate and it will seem like a chore at the end of the day.
- Be sure to include all the things your meal plan does not permit too.
- Writing down what you eat, when you eat, what you eat, how you eat and how you felt after eating will seem tedious but once you do it for a while you will gain a lot of insight and make your journey ahead easier.
- Make sure you include these fields in your food diary.

Food, place, time, hunger level, feelings.

- You can use app like Myfitness pal or Lose it or if you are old school you can use the template provided here or use a physical diary/ journal.

After completing a week's worth of food journaling, step back and look at what you've recorded. Search for any trends, patterns, or habits. For example, you might consider:

- Do my moods affect my eating habits? Do I reach for unhealthy snacks when I'm tired or stressed?
- How often do I eat on the run or while working?

Once you've identified areas for improvement, set one or two healthy eating goals for yourself.

- **Food diary observation:** You eat vegetables once a day.
- **Goal:** Eat vegetables twice a day

- **Food diary observation:** You order takeout or dine out three or four nights per week.
- **Goal:** Cook or eat more at home and order take out or dine out not more than once a week.

- **Food diary observation:** You eat healthy meals and snacks until about 3 pm, then binge at snack time.
- **Goal:** Eat healthier snacks or carry a healthy snack or fruit and a small handful of nuts to work every day.

Vinita

CONTRACTOR

Making Healthy Simple

www.vinitacontractor.com

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL

vinitacontractor

