Metagenics®

FirstLine Therapy

Healthy Transformation™

Weight Loss Program

FAQs

FirstLine Therapy Healthy Transformation™ Weight Loss Program FAQs

PROGRAM OVERVIEW & RECOMMENDATIONS

- How does the program work?
- How does being overweight affect my health?
- Is this program appropriate if I am obese?
- Should I discontinue prescription medications while on this program?
- Is this program appropriate for vegetarians?

NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS

- Can I take additional supplements while on this program?
- Why must I take a fiber supplement every day?
- Why are there 32 servings of protein options (bar, shake, soup) in my program kit, but only 30 servings for the nutritional supplements?

EXERCISE

- How much and what type of exercise should I do?

REST

- Why is sleep important for weight management?

POTENTIAL SYMPTOMS RELATED TO FOOD PLAN

- I just started the program. Why do I feel tired more quickly than usual?
- What should I do if I feel lightheaded or dizzy?
- If I'm hungry and have eaten all the food on my list for the day, what can I do?
- Why am I sometimes hungry after dinner?

MEAL PLANNING

- Why is planning meals important?
- Why can't I skip a meal or snack if I'm not hungry?
- Do I have to measure my foods all the time?
- What is the suggested serving size for vegetables?
- What's the best way to plan snack proteins? Do I have to eat nuts every day?
- What if I get bored with my food choices?
- Tips for eating alone

FOOD CHOICES

- Why can't I eat yogurt if cottage cheese and ricotta are on the list?
- Why is lowfat cream cheese in the condiment section on the food list?
- Why can't I eat hummus or green peas?
- Why can't I have fruit every day?
- Can I mix my protein shake with some fruit?
- Must I make my own salad dressing?
- What may be some good readymade salad dressings to try?
- Why is coconut oil not a liquid oil?
- Isn't coconut oil a "bad" saturated fat?
- Why must I buy "lite" canned coconut milk?
- What are chia seeds?

- How can I use chia seeds?
- What is flax or flaxseed?
- How can I use flax in this program?
- If stevia contains no carbohydrates, then why must I limit it?
- Is it okay for me to get my vegetable servings in blended veggie juice?
- Why is red meat limited to flank steak or very lean ground beef?
- If I eat eggs every day, will that make my cholesterol go up?
- What are “free-range” eggs and where do I find them?
- Isn't shrimp high in cholesterol?
- What are shirataki noodles?
- Can I use the protein vegetable soup mix as a seasoning?

BEVERAGES

- Why do I have to drink so much water?
- Does tea count toward my 6-8 glasses of water?
- Can I drink “flavored” seltzer or sparkling water?
- I'm used to drinking coffee. What if I don’t like the taste of tea?
- I miss having a glass of wine with dinner. Is it okay to cook with wine?

DINING OUT

- How do I measure portions while at a restaurant?
- How do I "measure" cooked spinach greens in a restaurant?
- What if the restaurant portion sizes for meat/fish are much larger than my palm size?
- How do I avoid bread, chips, and potatoes in a restaurant?
- More tips for eating on the run and dining out
- Tips for family gatherings and social events

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

How does the program work?

Some programs may result in weight loss at the expense of healthy lean tissue, so the ratio of unhealthy body fat may actually increase as weight is lost. The food plan for this program is clinically designed to restrict high glycemic carbohydrates and unhealthy fats, enhance protein intake, and provide you with a wide range of foods that are rich in healthful phytonutrients—to stimulate fat loss, maintain muscle, curb cravings and caloric intake, and promote overall health. The program also includes simple exercise and targeted nutritional supplements.

Protein supports lean body mass and helps you feel fuller longer. Certain carbohydrates—such as breads, rice, pasta, potatoes, and sweet foods—are known as high glycemic foods that typically contain higher levels of simple sugars that digest more quickly. This means that when you eat them, your blood sugar levels rise higher than optimal, calling on the hormone insulin to help utilize the sugars in your cells. Unfortunately, high levels of insulin encourage you to store fat instead of burning it. High glycemic foods can also increase food cravings, especially for sweeter foods that are higher in calories. Both consequences are counterproductive when you are attempting to eat right for optimal health and weight. Conversely, when you limit the amount of dietary carbohydrates that the body uses for energy, it then turns to its second choice for fuel: stored fats.

Stimulating fat loss and maintaining muscle helps you achieve a healthier body composition (ratio of fat-to-lean tissue), which is associated with greater overall wellness and healthy functioning. That's why it's important to keep your carbohydrate intake low. It's vital to carefully measure allotted veggies and fruit. Paying close attention to your carbs will help you to achieve your weight loss goal.

How does being overweight affect my health?
The FirstLine Therapy Healthy Transformation Weight Loss Program was designed for healthy individuals with a goal of losing fat to maintain overall health. Losing fat can improve cardiometabolic parameters.

Is this program appropriate if I am obese?
This program was scientifically designed for healthy individuals affected by obesity and is intended for recommendation and supervision by a licensed healthcare practitioner. Consult your healthcare provider to ensure that this program is appropriate for your needs.

Should I discontinue prescription medications while on this program?
Your prescribing healthcare provider should carefully monitor medications. If you are under the care of multiple healthcare providers, let each know that you are on this program so they can monitor your care and discuss any necessary adjustments with you. Also remember to discuss any supplements and over-the-counter products you take on a regular or daily basis with all of your healthcare providers.

Is this program appropriate for vegetarians?
The food plan does offer protein options for lacto-ovo vegetarians. If you prefer to limit consumption of animal proteins, speak to your healthcare practitioner about adding textured wheat protein, chia, hemp, and/or legumes (e.g., black beans) to your list of meal and snack/protein options to help you achieve daily desired protein intake to meet program guidelines. Due to increased carbohydrate content, this may also mean additional dietary modifications. He/she may still recommend that you limit nuts to 1 serving daily due to fat content. Also be aware that the packaged protein options and nutritional supplements for this program contain animal-derived ingredients (e.g., fish oil, whey protein).

NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS

Can I take additional supplements while on this program?
The nutritional components of this program have been carefully designed for healthy adults and include a daily multivitamin/mineral and other supplements to support overall health and well-being. Remember to discuss any supplements, prescription medications, and over-the-counter products you take on a regular or daily basis with your healthcare provider. Some other supplements, for example, may contain ingredients that could interfere with the program or lead to excess consumption of foundation nutrients. Follow the recommendations of your healthcare provider, which may or may not include additional supplements to support additional health goals.

Why must I take a fiber supplement every day?
US adults typically consume less than half the recommend daily adequate intake of dietary fiber. The fiber supplement is a low-sodium, powdered fiber product designed primarily to provide the metabolic benefits of fiber, while also supporting intestinal health and function (e.g., food transit, bowel regularity). It also helps create a feeling fullness. This program recommends taking the fiber supplement after dinner to help curb unhealthy snacking late at night. And remember to eat a variety of healthy, fiber-rich foods—like raw vegetables, greens, and nuts—throughout the day as well.

Why are there 32 servings of protein options (bar, shake, soup) in my program kit, but only 30 servings for the nutritional supplements?
Each kit contains 2 extra bars as a bonus. For instance, you can store one in your workplace or purse/laptop bag for a handy option. These extra bars do not have to be consumed within the 30-day period. Remember to choose only 1 protein option (soup, bar, shake) per day.

EXERCISE

How much and what type of exercise should I do?
Exercise is an essential component of a healthy weight loss program and helps reduce risk for heart disease and diabetes. It's also critical in preventing weight regain. Walking is one of the best ways to begin increasing physical activity for the benefits of aerobic exercise—it's safe, easy, and can be done every day. The basic recommendations for this program are 10,000 steps a day, which is considered a reasonable goal for adults to promote health. A pedometer can help you keep track of your daily steps has been shown to successfully motivate individuals to increase their physical activities. Depending on your current fitness level and normal activity, your healthcare practitioner may modify this goal until you are able to meet it. Your healthcare provider may also recommend a strength training program to help build and maintain lean body mass. Follow your healthcare provider's recommendations.

REST

Why is sleep important for weight management?
Studies have shown that adequate sleep will actually help to decrease appetite. Getting 7-8 hours of sleep also helps manage stress. Hormonal and behavioral responses to stress (e.g., stress eating) can lead to weight gain and increased fat storage.

POTENTIAL SYMPTOMS RELATED TO FOOD PLAN

I just started the program. Why do I feel tired more quickly than usual?
It's important to discuss all symptoms that may be related to the food plan with your healthcare provider. Your body may be going through a short period of “withdrawal” from all the sugars and carbohydrates you were eating prior to this. Curbing normal caffeine intake may also cause fatigue and other symptoms. As you continue on the program, you may actually notice increase in your normal energy levels as you exercise and eat nutrient-rich foods that promote a healthy blood sugar balance.

What should I do if I feel lightheaded or dizzy?
It's important to discuss all symptoms that may be related to the food plan with your healthcare provider. This sometimes occurs when salt intake is low. In that case, it may be helpful to drink 1 bouillon cube dissolved in 1 cup of warm or hot water. If you and your healthcare provider determine this is the cause of your symptoms (and you are not on a salt-restricted diet), then salting your food may prevent reoccurrence. This may also indicate low blood sugar or inadequate calorie consumption for your frame/activity level. Follow your healthcare practitioner's guidelines before making any alterations to the recommended eating guidelines or following the suggestions presented here.

If I'm hungry and have eaten all the food on my list for the day, what can I do?
After the first few weeks or so on the program, you should not be experiencing excess hunger. If this does happen on occasion, the best way to handle it is to have an extra protein snack, such as a hardboiled egg or a chicken leg. And remember to take your fiber serving every night after dinner, which may also help you feel fuller longer. Discuss any feelings of excess hunger with your healthcare provider, as this may prompt food plan adjustments.

Why am I sometimes hungry after dinner?
If this happens, look at your food choices for lunch and dinner that day. Did you skip a morning or afternoon snack? Were there some extra carbs that are not on your menu plan? If your diet was a bit too high in carbs for lunch and/or dinner, the corresponding rise in blood sugar may be stimulating hunger. Also look at your water consumption for the day, as your cravings may simply be a sign of thirst. And don't forget to take your fiber supplement after dinner mixed with a full glass of water.

MEAL PLANNING

Why is planning meals important?
If you have difficulty remembering to plan ahead, then you may not have the right foods around that you need to prepare meals. If you carefully plan your menu, you'll be less likely to eat something not on your food list because you're not searching around for “what to eat” when hungry. Planning also helps you enjoy your food and feel successful on your program.

Why can’t I skip a meal or snack if I'm not hungry?
When you skip meals, you may have a tendency to overeat at the next meal. It's best to spread your food out, eating about every 3-4 hours. Also eating small amounts of food at these regular intervals helps keep your blood sugar stable with smaller fluctuations (especially with low glycemic options). This will also help keep your insulin more stable and avoid excess fat storage. Unlike the gas in your car, the body turns the extra "fuel" you consume into fat if you don't use it. By putting less into the tank at a time and burning that fuel between meals by staying active, you help avoid weight gain—as well as that sluggish feeling after overeating.

Do I have to measure my foods all the time?
Measuring helps curb overeating, and the recommended daily servings have been calculated to help maintain daily carbohydrate content within a certain range. It's best to measure all your food at home to help you visually learn appropriate serving sizes for different types of foods. Then when you're eating in someone’s home or a restaurant, you'll be able to "guesstimate" portion sizes.

What is the suggested serving size for vegetables?
The preferred recommended serving size for vegetables is ½ cup to help control carbohydrate content. A range of ½-1 cup is stated to a few reasons. Some bulkier vegetables (e.g., cherry tomatoes, cauliflower) may be harder to measure in a ½ cup. Some patients, due to energy output or other factors may utilize a 1 cup serving for vegetables at their healthcare practitioner's recommendations. Unless you are told otherwise, use ½ cup for all vegetables for all 6 daily servings.

What's the best way to plan snack proteins? Do I have to eat nuts every day?
An easy way to plan snack proteins is to use 1 svg. of nuts daily at 1 snack. Nuts travel well and require no preparation, and the nuts in the list of food choices provide a non-animal protein and healthy fat. You don't have to eat nuts every day (or at all), and you should never consume more than 1 svg. daily.

What if I get bored with my food choices?
The potential food combinations from the food list are virtually limitless. But if you're limiting yourself to a smaller range of foods, then "taste fatigue" can occur—as well as deprive your body of the variety of phytonutrients that are present in different foods. On a "bored" day, try choosing your favorite foods (e.g., lobster, flank steak, crab legs) and eat slowly and to really enjoy them. It also helps to think of your long-term goals. For example, it may help to find a picture of yourself when you were at your ideal weight—or a locale you'd like to visit when you meet your goals—and put it on your refrigerator to inspire you. Using different herbs and spices can also help shake things up and give foods a whole new flavor.

Tips for eating alone:
Eating by yourself AND eating healthy can be quite a challenge. With no one to share the shopping, cooking and cleaning up, you may have a tendency to not want to bother making a healthy meal and choose a frozen dinner or a fast food. Many people also overeat out of loneliness. When this happens, you might try something new that doesn't focus on food. For example, where can you go to meet new people? A seminar, church group, or community volunteer organization? Often when meeting new people, you will find out that others struggle in a similar way.

Some strategies to overcome these issues:

- Make a commitment to yourself to eat dinner every night, no skipping this important meal!
- Set the table with nice dishes and a crystal water goblet. This will encourage you to put out a meal. And you will look forward to a nice dinner every night once you create this routine.
- Planning ahead is critical: a shopping list and a weekly menu plan to organize your meals and plan for leftovers. This will help curb time spend prepping and cooking meals AND you won't waste any food.
- Plan your meal of leftovers on a night that you have a meeting or anticipate working late.
- Avoid keeping too many snacks around. Stock up only on healthy snacks: raw vegetables, string cheese, and hardboiled eggs can make simple snacks when you feel tempted.

FOOD CHOICES

Why can't I eat yogurt if cottage cheese and ricotta are on the list?
These cheeses are very low in carbohydrates at the recommended serving sizes, while a typical serving of yogurt (even plain) has too many carbs for this program.

Why is lowfat cream cheese in the condiment section on the food list?
Small amounts of lowfat cream cheese may be used occasionally in designated recipes in the patient guide and online at metagenics.com/healthytransformation without having to worry about fat/carbohydrate content.

Why can't I eat hummus or green peas?
Both are considered to be legumes, which are generally too high in carbohydrates for this program. The main ingredient in hummus is garbanzo beans (chick peas). While green peas are not allowed, sugar snap peas and snow peas are okay because they are mostly fiber, with the peas not developed in the pod. (Due to carbohydrate content, most beans—black, kidney, pinto, etc.—are also excluded from this program unless otherwise specified by your healthcare provider.)

Why can't I have fruit every day?
Most fruits are high in carbs, which is why the eating guidelines suggest having only 1 serving of fruit every other day (if at all)—or unless your healthcare provider suggests otherwise. This way your sweet tooth won't be "tickled" too often! Remember to eat only whole fruits, not juices, from the list of recommended foods. The fiber content in these whole fruits reduces their glycemic load for a lesser increase on blood sugar levels. Plus, fiber makes them more filling.

Can I mix my protein shake with some fruit?
Every other day, you might vary the flavor of your shake by using fresh or frozen berries and mixing in a blender with some ice. Be careful to measure the correct amount of berries to keep your carbohydrate intake at the suggested level.

Must I make my own salad dressing?
A side benefit to making your own dressing is that it's also quite a bit cheaper to make your own. (See recipes in the patient guide and online at metagenics.com/healthytransformation). But if you prefer, you can buy readymade dressings as long as you are sure that there are no added sweeteners, dairy, or other ingredients to avoid. Keep a bottle of homemade or store bought dressing in your office and one at home for easy salad making.

What may be some good readymade salad dressings to try?
It may be difficult for you to find a prepared dressing with no other sweeteners that also meets the other requirements of this food plan. Your safest bet would be to carefully examine some of the nationally distributed organic varieties of olive oil/vinegar, Italian, shiitake/sesame, lemon/chive, etc. Be sure to read all ingredients of any prepared food.

Why is coconut oil not a liquid oil?
Coconut oil, when stored at room temperature, is a solid fat/oil. When the outside temperature warms up to 76 degrees, it "melts" to a liquid. This does not mean that it has gone bad or turned rancid. It is completely normal and healthy.

Isn't coconut oil a "bad" saturated fat?
Actually, coconut oil is a healthy saturated fat. It is not associated with increased cholesterol levels and lends a lovely flavor to foods, especially in stir-fries. (Trans fats—present in margarine, fried foods, or hydrogenated oils—should be avoided in many cases as they can negatively influence cholesterol levels.)

Why must I buy "lite" canned coconut milk?
Actually, you can buy regular canned coconut milk and then dilute it with equal parts of water. It is actually cheaper to buy regular canned coconut milk, because it typically costs the same as the lighter variety in the same size can. In other words, diluting at home gives you double the amount for the same cost. Use canned coconut milk only as fat for cooking. Use boxed coconut milk only as a shake mixer.

What are chia seeds?
Chia seeds are an unprocessed whole food that is high in fiber and healthy omega-3 fatty acids. One serving is equal to 2 tsp. Remember to count this in your daily servings of healthy fat.

How can I use chia seeds?
You might want to add 1-2 tsp. of chia seeds to your protein shake for added fiber (and healthy fat) to help you feel fuller longer. Chia seeds in your shake will cause it to form a gel after 5-10 minutes, so it's important to drink it before this occurs.

What is flax or flaxseed?
Flaxseed contains a significant amount of fiber and omega-3 fats. It has been suggested that they are helpful in maintaining healthy cholesterol and blood sugar levels. (Flaxseed oil contains omega-3s, but not the fiber.)

How can I use flax in this program?
Flaxseeds must be ground for best absorption. It is best to grind yourself, as it may turn rancid after grinding if not frozen immediately. It is easy to grind in a (clean) coffee grinder and put in a jar in the freezer, then spoon out teaspoons of flaxmeal as needed when frozen. You can also add 1-2 tsp. to your Healthy Transformation Protein Shake to make it more filling due to its fiber and healthy fat content. You can also add a small amount of ground flaxseed to salad dressing for added texture (if using immediately—do not store). Before grinding, whole flaxseeds may be stored at room temperature. Roasted flaxseeds also make a great meal or salad topping.

If stevia contains no carbohydrates then why must I limit it?
It's important to decrease your need for sweet-tasting foods because you'll find that your cravings will also decrease, making it easier to stick the program recommendations. Your taste buds may also begin to appreciate the natural sweetness of whole foods.

Is it okay for me to get my vegetable servings in blended veggie juice?
Whole vegetables—fresh, frozen, cooked, or even puréed—are the only recommended choices for this program. Veggie juices contain too many simple carbohydrates because of the missing fiber content.

Why is red meat limited to flank steak or very lean ground beef?
All other cuts of beef and other red meats are too high in saturated fat. While this program is not a lowfat diet, it is designed to help you eat more of the right type of "healthy" fats, such as foods that are higher in monounsaturated fats (e.g., olive oil, avocado, certain nuts) and polyunsaturated fats (e.g., grape seed oil, sesame oil).

If I eat eggs every day, will that make my cholesterol go up?
Eggs do not necessarily negatively influence serum cholesterol levels because they contain roughly twice the amount of unsaturated "healthy" fat compared to saturated fat. Unsaturated fats produce "healthy" HDL cholesterol, while saturated and trans fats produce "unhealthy" LDL cholesterol. While the majority of cholesterol content is in the egg yolk, so are most of its nutrients—including vitamin D, calcium, and folate. That's why this food plan recommends consuming the whole egg unless otherwise specified by your healthcare practitioner.

What are “free-range” eggs and where do I find them?
Eggs from chickens that are not caged and allowed to run free are called “free-range” or “cage-free” eggs. In addition, these chickens are usually not fed any antibiotics or hormones. There are many local farms and grocery stores that sell free-range eggs, which also tend to have a more favorable fat profile.

Isn't shrimp high in cholesterol?
Shrimp, like eggs, does contain a significant amount of cholesterol, but is very low in saturated fat. It's the overconsumption *high* saturated fat and *high* cholesterol (e.g., fried shrimp with fries) that is thought to play a role in raising your blood cholesterol levels over time. In general, shrimp and similar shellfish prepared sensibly should have no negative effect on cholesterol levels. Follow your healthcare provider's recommendations and avoid consumption if you have any known sensitivity to shellfish.

What are shirataki noodles?
On this plan they are considered a vegetable, and they make a great alternative when you're craving pasta. Made from soy, 1 serving contains only 3 g of carbohydrate—which is mostly fiber. Shirataki noodles enhance a soup or a stir-fry, and are found in the refrigerated section of your produce department in most stores. Each package contains 2 servings. They have a strong smell that is removed after rinsing, cooking, and then putting them back into the dry pan over medium heat to finish "drying" them out. (Then you can follow preparation instruction in the patient guide or online at metagenics.com/healthytransformation.) It really feels and tastes like you're eating pasta!

Can I use the protein vegetable soup mix as a seasoning?
Yes, many people use the soup mix as a seasoning. Be aware this also counts toward your daily protein option from the nutrition kit. See more soup mix recipes at metagenics.com/healthytransformation.

BEVERAGES

Why do I have to drink so much water?
You need to be well hydrated in order to efficiently lose weight. Water is important for overall health and cleansing unwanted substances from the body, and also helps curb hunger. In fact, cravings for sugar/food can often be the body's way of signaling thirst. Let you healthcare provider know if this food plan increases your thirst, as this may be a signal to adjust dietary or other recommendations.

Does tea count toward my 6-8 glasses of water?
All herbal teas count in your 6-8 glasses per day, and are unlimited. Regular tea or coffee (regular or decaf) is limited to 1 cup daily. Drinking large amounts of caffeine can have diuretic effects that increase risk of dehydration. Caffeine can also enhance the body's stress response to trigger unhealthy snacking.

Can I drink "flavored" seltzer or sparkling water?
As long as it's just sparkling water with natural flavors added, you can drink all that you want. Beware of flavored seltzers that say "zero calories" because they may have artificial sweeteners added. You can also add lemon or lime wedges (or juice) to any type of water for flavor without worrying about having to count it as a fruit serving.

I'm used to drinking coffee. What if I don't like the taste of tea?
Try not to think of tea as a coffee "substitute" because it does not have the strong robust flavor of coffee. Buy a sampler of herbal teas and you might find there is one that suits your taste buds. Tea has many beneficial antioxidants. Try making sun tea with an interesting flavor of herbal tea. (Simply put 2 tea bags in a sealed glass jar of water and allow it to sit in the sun for 1-2 hours. It will be somewhat strong and you can dilute it with ice cubes or additional water as needed.) You may need to try several different flavors of tea before finding one that pleases your taste buds. You can still enjoy 1 cup of coffee daily (without sweeteners or dairy).

I miss having a glass of wine with dinner. Is it okay to cook with wine?
Wine contains too many carbohydrates and also loosens your inhibitions, encouraging you to eat more than desirable. But since all the alcohol burns off in the cooking process, it's fine to cook with small amounts of wine. So you can still savor the flavor without the worry.

DINING OUT

How do I measure portions while at a restaurant?
For protein servings, the size of your palm can help you eyeball what is on your plate. Or if you know the pre-cooked weight of a chicken breast or very lean ground beef patty the size of your individual palm, then you may be able to choose/request that when ordering. Knowing what a ½ cup of vegetables looks like on a plate at home can also help you gauge appropriate serving sizes in a restaurant. For your greens, also try measuring what 2.5 oz. looks like on a plate or bowl at home to be able to eyeball that serving size when eating away from home. (If you eat less than 2.5 oz. for that meal, then you'll know about how much more you will need to eat at home to get your 5 oz. total of greens for the day. If you forget the recommended serving size of a particular fruit on the list of appropriate choices, the size of your palm will usually suffice.

How do I "measure" cooked spinach greens in a restaurant?
Greens, especially spinach, shrink a lot when cooked. Practice measuring 2.5 oz. of raw spinach at home, then sauté it, and then measure it again in terms of tablespoons/cups or its visual space on plate—whatever is easiest for you to remember. Now it will be easy to judge an appropriate serving size in a restaurant. (Remember to ask how it's prepared, as it may contain butter or other dairy products.)

What if the restaurant portion sizes for meat/fish are much larger than my palm size?
Before you start to eat, ask for a take home container and put the rest of the food away. Or order an appetizer portion and save money in addition to staying compliant. You can also split an entrée with a dining partner.

How do I avoid bread, chips, and potatoes in a restaurant?
To avoid temptation, it's always easier if you decline the basket of rolls or chips (if agreeable with your tablemates). Instead, order a shared appetizer of salad or raw crudités, such as celery, olives, and cucumber. Then tell your waiter that you don't want any starches (e.g., buns, fries, rice) with your entrée. They are usually willing to substitute extra veggies or a side salad.

More tips for eating on the run and dining out (organized by type of restaurant):

General

- When dining out with others, place your order first so you won't be tempted by what others at the table have chosen.
- Salt is always a concern. Do not add salt to any food when eating out before tasting it.
- Added sugars in dressings and sauces are almost always a problem in restaurants. This may leave you with sugar and carbohydrate cravings for the next day or so.
- Oil and vinegar is the safest salad dressing. “Lite” is never safe, as sugar is always added to lite dressings to make up for the fat removed. There are often oil and vinegar cruets by the salad bars in most restaurants. If not you can always ask for oil and vinegar.

- When ordering a salad, avoid iceberg lettuce; mixed greens are a better choice. Have lots of chopped veggies, a sprinkle of Parmesan or other cheese from your food list, olives, avocado, and grilled chicken or fish.
- Ask for no sauce or have it served on the side. Ask if there is sugar in the sauce. You can almost count on it (or artificial sweeteners) being in there.
- Some ethnic restaurants might have better choices than others. Be aware that they too will most often have sauces with sugars or other sweeteners in them. It's always wise to ask how a food is prepared and what the ingredients are. If you tell them you're “allergic” to sugar/sweeteners, they will be SO careful to give you accurate information.
- Higher end restaurants (or "white-cloth dining") will usually offer menus that are easier for you to choose from and may be more willing/able to make substitutions.
- Fast food restaurants change their menu choices and their ingredients very frequently. Some things that may be within the food plan guidelines today may not be at some future time, so please check all ingredients (if able). Many national chains offer nutritional information on their websites. Be aware that specific ingredients, such as sweeteners in secret sauces, may not always be readily available.

Thai

- Be careful of all sauces, fried fish dishes, and sugary items, such as Thai iced tea (has lots of sugar and half and half).
- The appetizer mee krob is laced with sugar or corn syrup.
- Peanut sauce that accompanies satay and cucumber salad contains added sugar.
- It’s best to stick to their salads (check the dressing) and simple vegetable and steamed fish dishes.
- If you're allergic to peanuts, beware of various dishes that contain peanuts (which are also NOT on the food list).

Italian

- Avoid the pasta, bread, and house dressings.
- Order broiled or baked fish with an extra portion of veggies. Often their leafy greens, like broccoli, spinach, or escarole, are quite tasty sautéed with just oil and garlic.
- Ask for oil and vinegar on the side for salad dressing.

Indian

- Many of the menu choices are fairly safe.
- Avoid vegetables that are prepared with half and half or full fat yogurt; don’t hesitate to ask how they are prepared.
- Portions of meat are usually not too large.
- Vegetarian choices can offer a delicious variety of vegetables, but beware of legumes that are not on your food list.

Mexican

- Chicken or shrimp fajitas may be the best choices. Just have the meat/fish and approved veggies on the plate. It’s basically a stir-fry without the tortilla!
- Avoid all beans and rice.
- Tortilla chips and salsa (often with added sugars) are dangerous to have even a bite of, since you only will want more!

- Also avoid pico de gallo (jalapeños, onions, tomatoes, cilantro, and other possible spices) if you are nearing your vegetable allocation for the day.
- Quick-serve Mexican restaurants may offer "naked" burritos (without tortilla) or salad bowls. Choose grilled chicken/shrimp/fish, fajita veggies, lettuce (try to avoid iceberg), and guacamole. Hold the sour cream, beans, corn, and salsa. Ask about dressing ingredients and order on the side.

Japanese
- Deep-fried tempura is off the list!
- Plain fish or chicken or steak and veggies may be quite satisfying.
- Edamame (green soy beans) in the pod, flavored with a little salt is a perfect appetizer to order.
- Miso or mushroom soup may be within your dietary guidelines, although it's always best to ask for ingredients.

Asian
- Be careful of sauces, especially teriyaki.
- Ask for a steamed veggie to substitute for rice.
- It is safest to have plain foods, such as steamed chicken and broccoli.
- Salad is not as common in Asian restaurants; if it is menu option, there will likely be a sweetener added to the dressing.

Greek
- Greek or Mediterranean salad (hold the feta and dressing) with grilled chicken may be suitable.
- Also try a roasted quarter chicken or chicken kabobs if vegetables comply with food choices.

American Diners/Grills
- Look for salad options with mixed greens or spinach. Ask for oil/vinegar dressing on the side, and hold cheese, bacon, etc. Also hold eggs if the salad contains another protein option, such as grilled chicken.
- Grilled chicken, salmon, shrimp, tuna, sirloin, and Portobello mushrooms are acceptable choices. Substitute steamed/grilled veggies for mashed potatoes or rice, and hold all cheese/cream toppings or sugary sauces.
- Vegetable omelets; hold the cheese.
- Check vegetable soups for ingredients.

Burger Chains
- Grilled chicken salad options may be your safest bet. Check for dressing ingredients and hold (or remove) cheese, tortilla strips, beans, bacon, corn, etc.

Tips for family gatherings and social events:
It's not difficult to understand why people fall into bad habits at social events or during the holiday season. Everywhere you go there is somebody offering a beverage or dessert. Is it rude to refuse? Visits to friends and family are painful when you find yourself facing a table laden with all manner of forbidden foods. If you've been working very hard at eating healthy, losing weight, or maintaining your weight, this may be a difficult time for you. Maintaining control can become a huge challenge. Food and festivity will always be a major part of any gathering. We conduct business over food, we rejoice over food, we grieve over food, and this can be a stressful time for many of us.

When presented with favorite family recipes and the tasty dishes that are common at any family get-together, it may feel difficult to say "no." Think about the people, not the food. Concentrate on socializing and reminiscing with relatives or friends. Think about the occasion you're celebrating instead of the food.

When you arrive at a gathering, check out all the food options and develop a plan that will enable you to sample foods you know are on your food plan. Be sure that you offer to bring a dish you know you can eat. If it is a sit-down meal, do not linger at the table when you're finished eating because you may be tempted to “pick” at what is left on the table. After the meal, plan a group activity, such as a game of cards, a walk, or a ball game. Even better if you do it while others are eating dessert!

Some more strategies you can employ to avoid overeating and sabotaging all your hard work:

- Use smaller plates if available when at a buffet-style party
- Watch your portion sizes and take small "tastes" of appropriate foods.
- Eat slowly. Try to be the last person finished eating. Take small bites and chew slowly.
- Don’t arrive with an empty stomach. It's especially important not to skip meals when you know you have a dinner to attend. Try having a protein shake or bar before going to a party. If you arrive hungry, you will be more likely to overeat.
- Snacks at a gathering might include nuts (1 serving only). Eat them slowly, 1 at a time.
- Sit down to eat. Don’t stand by the table “picking.”
- Try not to sit within arm’s reach of tempting snack foods.
- Be assertive. Don't feel as though you have to say "yes" to everyone that offers you food and drink. Do not let yourself be bullied into eating something that you really don't want.
- Conversation is a good way to take the focus off food, but move away from the buffet so you won't be tempted to eat while you talk.
- Remember that alcohol calories can add up. Enjoy 1 glass of wine if desired, but remember that alcohol can lessen inhibitions and induce overeating—plus your food choices may be less healthy. Try consuming sparkling or plain water with a lemon or lime.
- Be sure you exercise on a day you have a social event that includes a meal.
- When you are full, stop eating. It's not necessary to finish everything on your plate; you may have taken too much!
- Don’t be discouraged if you end up overindulging. Tomorrow is a new day. Get back on track right away.

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