

## **Changing Your Eating Habits for Good**

1. Start with a written plan. Make a list of all the things you hope to accomplish with your new eating habits, and include all the goals that your MD or dietitian has suggested. Next, organize the goals in order of importance to your health. For example, you may have listed weight loss, reduced intake of salt, reduced intake of caffeine, increased fiber intake, reduced fat intake. Because eating less fat will help with weight loss, place it first on your list.
2. List your weaknesses and your strengths with your current eating habits. For example, list all the appropriate foods you eat regularly as well as the foods that you eat that you shouldn't. Make a plan for eliminating foods that you shouldn't eat. Focus on environmental controls rather than will power; simply do not keep food around that you shouldn't eat. If you love ice cream but shouldn't eat it, then you should not buy it, or go into an ice cream parlor.
3. Enlist the help and support of your family. Show them your list of food weaknesses. If their favorite foods are also on that list, ask them to eat them elsewhere, or compromise. For example, if ice cream is your weakness, yet a family favorite, compromise by asking them to only buy flavors you don't like.
4. Food that is not at your house, or is not within your grasp is not a temptation to you, and therefore not at threat to your goals.
5. Get out your favorite recipes and cookbooks. For those recipes that do not fit into your dietary goals, use a table or appropriate substitutions to improve them.
6. Keep a core selection of staples in your home so that quick yet appropriate meals can be put together at the last minute.
7. Plan your meals ahead of time. Take time each Sunday to look at your calendar, noting where you need to be each day, and how much or how little you will have to fix meals. Write down a possible menu for each day. For busy days, try most of the food preparation the evening before, or using a crock-pot recipe so the meal will cook itself while you are away.
8. Learn as much as you can about your dietary restrictions. Read articles in the paper or magazines, or on the Internet. Consult a registered dietitian.

9. Give yourself credit for small accomplishments. If you've lost ½ pound, pat yourself on the back rather than sulk that you didn't lose 2 pounds.

Staples.....Staples...Staples.....Staples.....Staples.....Staples.....Staples

Spray pan coating  
Diet margarine spread  
Molly McButter or Butter Buds  
Reduce calorie salad dressings  
Fresh Vegetables for tossed salad  
Frozen Vegetables (plain or mixtures without sauce)  
Side dish starches (potatoes, rice, pasta, canned beans)  
Canned low sodium tomatoes, tomato sauce, paste  
Frozen Egg Substitute  
Canned Water pack tuna and salmon  
Boned and Skinned chicken breast (wrap and freeze)  
Lean ground beef (freeze in ½ pound bundles)  
Reduced fat cheeses  
Low fat or nonfat milk  
Canned evaporated skim milk  
Low fat cottage cheese  
Reduced fat sour cream, nonfat yogurt  
Low sodium broth granules (beef and chicken)  
Reduced sodium canned soup  
100% whole wheat bread, oatmeal bread, Italian and French bread  
Fresh fruits and fruits canned in natural juices  
Frozen concentrated fruit juices  
Whole wheat flours, oats, oat bran, cornmeal  
Whole grain cereals such as Cheerios, Shredded Wheat, Fiber One  
Small selection of low fat entrees such as Lean Cuisine

## **More helpful tips for helping yourself**

1. Learn which events trigger your appetite (like TV or getting upset) and work on controlling them. Work on one at a time.
2. If you must have calorie-rich food in the house, keep them frozen or in hard to reach places.
3. Avoid leftovers and second helpings by preparing just enough food for one family meal.
4. Use smaller dishes and glasses: it will make your smaller portions look larger.
5. Eat slowly and chew thoroughly, putting your utensils down between each bite. You'll eat less, savoring each bite.
6. Confine your eating to certain rooms and, if possible, at regular times each day. Don't read or watch TV while eating.
7. Learn to leave food on your plate especially if you're served large portions: it is no less wasted in a body that doesn't need it than it is discarded.
8. Never skip meals. This usually leaves you hungry. Add to those hunger pangs the mistaken belief that "since you didn't eat lunch, you are entitled to that plate of cookies or a hot fudge sundae"...and you'll nibble your way right into the next size. What's worse, you'll wonder why you're not losing weight since you're depriving yourself of all those regular meals.
9. Have low-calorie snacks available. If you feel the urge to crunch, try biting into a fresh carrot instead of a cookie. If you have a good substitute handy, you can calm your urge to snack without ruining your diet.
10. Don't cut too far back on calories. Besides feeling weak, dizzy and irritable, you'll also feel hungry and this kind of hunger often leads to overeating.
11. Set realistic goals. Strive for 1-2 pounds each week and weigh yourself once a week at the most.
12. Exercise regularly. You'll use up more calories (even when you're sleeping) in addition to the calories you burn by exercising!
13. Realize that cravings can be physical or mental. You may love foods because they were childhood treats or perhaps just because something 'forbidden' is inviting. Snacking to ease cravings won't do a thing for your body.

14. Remember, what you don't eat today, you can eat tomorrow. The snack you're craving will not disappear. So don't feel you have to grab it before it's gone forever. Save it for a day when it fits better into your calorie allowance.
15. Making progress takes time and effort. Believe in yourself. Remember, it takes 3,500 calories to gain a pound, so one "bad day" isn't going to ruin your plan. Just make sure the next few days are "light ones".