**Tips on Keeping a Food Diary**

Keeping track of what and how much you are eating is an important part of establishing weight loss and healthier eating habits. Putting it down on paper pushes your awareness to a level that you did not have before. According to the National Weight Loss Registry, a study of over 10,000 people who have lost weight and kept it off, people who keep food records are the most successful with weight loss. You don't have to do it forever, but it is very helpful while you are making healthy changes.

**Find a method that works for your and record everything, not just when you are "being good"**There are many apps that make keeping a food diary a little easier, like My Fitness Pal, Lose It, and Calorie King. Or go old school and use a notebook and pen and paper. A piece of candy, a handful of pretzels, a can of soda or a small donut may not seem like much at the time, but over a week these calories add up! Remember to record drinks too.

**Do it now**Don't depend on your memory at the end of the day. Record your eating as you go.

**Be specific**Make sure you include "extras," such as gravy on your meat or cheese on your vegetables. Do not generalize. For example, record french fries as french fries, not as potatoes.

**Estimate amounts**  
Use the following guidelines to help you estimate portion sizes:

* ½ teaspoon=a finger tip
* 1 teaspoon=a thumb tip
* 2 tablespoons=1 golf ball
* 1 small fruit=a computer mouse
* 1 medium fruit=baseball
* 1½ ounce cheese=6 dice
* 1-2 ounces snack food=small handful
* 3 ounces=deck of cards or palm of hand
* 1 pancake or waffle=a 4″ CD
* 4 small cookies=casino chips
* ½ cup fruit, vegetable, or cooked cereal, pasta, or rice=1 small fist
* 1 tortilla= a small 7″ plate
* 1 muffin=1 large egg

**Every few days stop and review what you've eaten, look for patterns, and make a plan for how you can make healthy changes.**

**Here are a few popular tools utilized for journaling:**

**Online Journaling/Phone Apps**

[www.myfitnesspal.com](http://www.myfitnesspal.com)

[www.fitday.com](http://www.fitday.com)

[www.Sparkpeople.com](http://www.Sparkpeople.com)

**Book Journaling**

[The Ultimate Diet Log : A Unique Food and Exercise Diary That Fits Any Weight-Loss Plan](http://www.booksamillion.com/p/Ultimate-Diet-Log/Suzanne-Schlosberg/9780618968954?id=5903452356729)

[The Calorie King Food & Exercise Journal](http://www.booksamillion.com/p/Calorie-King-Food-Exercise-Journal/Allan-Borushek/9781930448155?id=5903452356729)

[Food and Exercise Journal : 2014 Happiness Is a Goal](http://www.booksamillion.com/p/Food-Exercise-Journal/Cool-Journals/9781494822873?id=5903452356729)