

Food Diary

Your fat cells all together are your primary fuel storage. They produce a hormone leptin when full. Leptin acts to maintain adequate food intake over the long term. Leptin hormone levels influence how hungry you get and hence how much you eat. Leptin also effects your metabolism slowing it down in times that food is in short supply.

Leptin works together with a hormone ghrelin produced by cells at the top of your stomach. The combined effects of Ghrelin and Leptin signal when to search for food or leave food alone.

In our modern world we tend to eat in meals at convenient times. This is far different than foraging and grazing for food all day we would probably do if living off the food on the land. We therefore get significant highs and lows in our hunger feelings. Part of a successful weight loss program must be to reduce the hunger peaks as much as possible while continuing with slow steady weight loss at a rate that will let our bodyweight set point adjust itself over time.

How to use One

To effect change we all need to understand where we are starting from. It takes a little bit of effort to maintain a record of how, when and what we eat but in the end the information we learn about our daily eating routines will help us to decide on what to try.

Use the Daily Food Diary template to record your food intake each day.

There is no need to evaluate to calories at this point. Simply record:

- When you feel hungry.
- When you ate and what did you eat?
- Did you eat because you were hungry – Yes/ No
- If No – why did you eat, habit? Family influence? Boredom? Etc.

Step 1. Record the day of week and time. Do as many days as you can

Step 2: Rate yourself on how hungry you feel and the time

- o **Very hungry** – you need to eat right now,
- o **hungry**- you could wait another half an hour before eating
- o **Not hungry** at all
- o **Full** – no real need to eat

Step 3: When did you eat, time?

Is it a snack, a meal, what kind of foods are you eating? Give a brief list.

Step 4: Did you eat because you were hungry? Yes or NO

Step 5: If No, why did you eat? How did you feel afterwards?

Review

Once you have completed each 24-hour record, you can review how hungry you were during the day and if your food intake matched the level of hunger you felt. Are there opportunities to change when and how you eat? what influences your food choices? are you fully in control of when, how and what you eat? Only change one or two things at a time and find out the result before doing more.

The following are some ideas that you can implement to help reduce or eliminate your hunger:

- 1) Eliminate high carb treats when you are not feeling hungry, like potato chips, candy bars and ice-cream
- 2) Find healthy snacks that can be eaten that stay in your stomach longer raise the food level in your stomach so ghrelin producing cells at the top of the stomach stay covered.e.g. vegetable snacks like celery, carrots and/or hard boiled eggs.
- 3) Choose non- calorie or low-calorie drinks like water, flavoured water, or black coffee, 300 ml s or one cup is sufficient.
- 4) Regular smaller meals and not missing meals helps avoid large ghrelin spikes
- 5) Continue recording your 24-hour food intake diary day by day until you find what works for you.

Daily Food Diary - example

Day and time	How hungry were you? Very hungry A little Not hungry full	When did you eat, what type of meal? What did you eat	Did you eat because you were hungry? Yes or NO	If No, why did you eat?	How did you feel afterwards? Over full Satisfied Still hungry What would you change?
Example: Monday 7:00 am	very hungry	Breakfast Egg, toast, coffee with sugar	Yes		satisfied nothing
8:00	Not hungry				
9:00	Not hungry				
10:00am	Not hungry	10:30 Donuts and coffee	No	meeting, food free	Too much sugar feeling Bring sugar free gum to meetings and water
11:00am	A little hungry				
12 noon	very hungry	Burger and fries	Yes		Over full Only eat 2/3 of the meal, stop eating before you feel full.
1:00 pm	Not hungry				
2:00 pm	Not hungry				
3:00 pm					
4:00pm					
5:00 pm					

