

DIETARY ASSESSMENT WITH SMARTPHONE APPLICATIONS

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Someone once told me “you can exercise yourself fit but you cannot exercise yourself thin.” Changes in dietary intake are necessary for sustained weight loss. A food diary can help to cut down on munching and stress eating. It raises your awareness of what you eat and the nutritional and caloric content of food.

First identify your goal for example weight loss, decrease in dietary sugar, increase in dietary fiber. Choose your format paper and pencil, computer, smart phone. Attempt to write in your journal daily and as soon as practical after eating a snack or a meal to avoid missed intake. Estimate portion size correctly this may mean initially measuring quantity or weighing foods in the beginning. Don't forget to count sauces, dips, and dressing calories.

Many people tell me that their children do not eat that much. Is it an intentional lie? No, but is a misperception we have for a lot of us underestimate intake because of grazing, portion size, and calorie containing drinks. Food diaries can bring these calorie excesses to your attention and result in 50% increase in weight loss.

Fortunately for us, we live in the electronic era. Instead of trying to do everything manually we have many useful online resources and many are FREE. Several options include MyFitnessPal, MyNetDiary, Fooducate, Lose It and Weight Watchers Mobile. Each application has its own perks but probably any of them will work for you. Most will allow you to calculate your recommended daily intake, set a goal and track your progress.

So success hinges on:

- 1) Awareness of the caloric density of what you eat.
- 2) Accountability for what you eat and when you eat.
- 3) Substitution of lower calorie foods for higher calorie foods.
- 4) Choosing healthier less processed foods.
- 5) Purposeful and deliberate eating.

Finally, persistence you will not be perfect shoot for good choices 90% of the time and you will be successful.