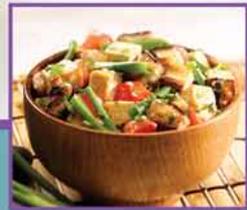
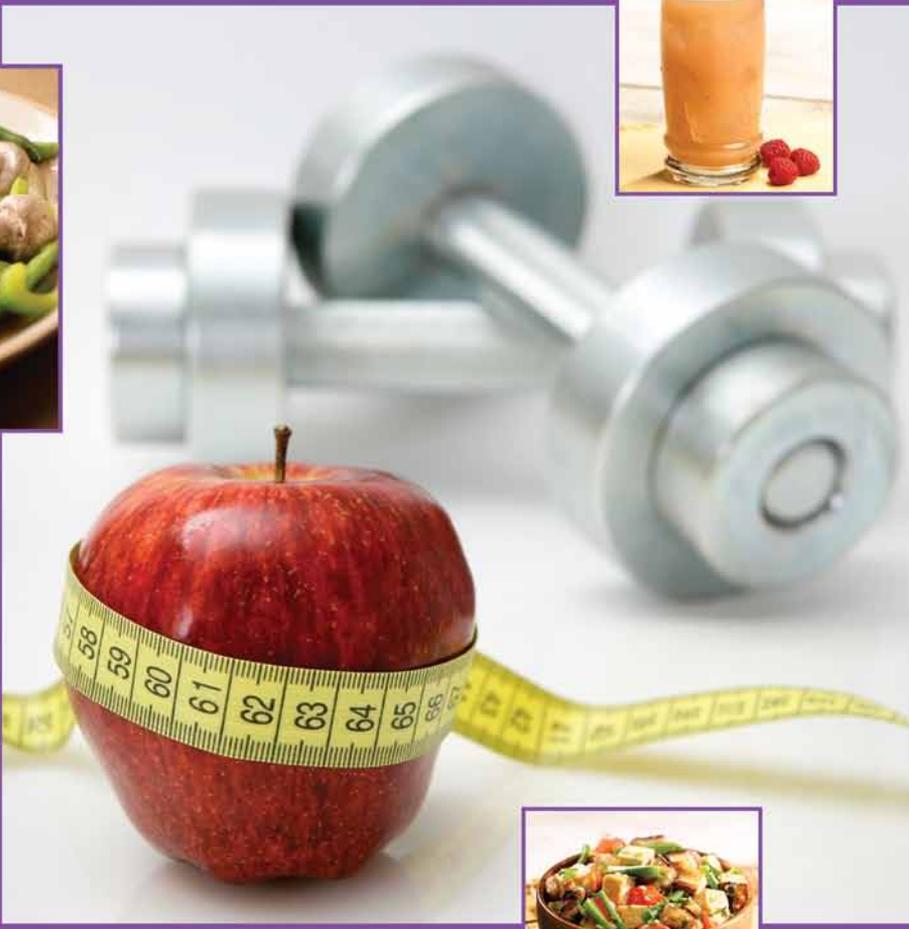


# Stay F.I.T. Guide

Focused. In Charge. Transformed.



The 3 & 3 Plan

# Contents

|                                    |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Welcome .....                      | 1  |
| Numbers.....                       | 2  |
| Successful Weight Maintenance..... | 5  |
| Sample Meal Plan.....              | 11 |
| Healthy Fuelings.....              | 12 |
| Meal Tracker.....                  | 16 |
| How to Visualize Portions.....     | 17 |
| Safeguarding Your Success.....     | 18 |
| Staying Healthy .....              | 25 |
| Free Support Materials.....        | 33 |

# Welcome

## To Medifast Weight Control Centers!



**Congratulations!** You have now reached the next stage of your Medifast program: lifelong weight maintenance, or Stay F.I.T.

Medifast hopes you feel proud of what you have been able to accomplish, and confident about being able to maintain your new weight, appearance, energy, feelings of well-being, and overall health.

This Stay F.I.T. Guide will teach you a common-sense approach to healthy weight maintenance, based on the idea of balancing your food intake with the calories you burn.

In addition to eating well, you'll explore mindfulness and other behavior techniques to strengthen your ability to make healthy choices and create health, day-by-day.

Medifast congratulates you on getting to your weight-loss goal, and your Medifast Weight Control Centers Counselors are here to support you as you embark on this wonderful new journey.

Follow the meal plans in this Stay F.I.T. Guide if you have less than 15 lbs to lose, as the Jump Start Plan is not appropriate for those wishing to lose less than 15 lbs.

# Numbers: The Key to Lifelong Healthy Weight

It's a simple formula: To maintain your current healthy weight, your calories *in* need to equal your calories *out*. Otherwise, you'll continue to lose weight—or gain weight back.

To put the brakes on your weight loss and keep yourself at your healthy weight, you need to understand how many calories you're expending each day, then match that with a meal plan that supplies that amount of calories—no more, and no less.

Here's a cheat-sheet of the numbers you'll be using:

**Total Energy Expenditure**, or **TEE**, is the number of total calories you burn in a typical day. This is the number you'll be matching with the calories you consume daily. Your TEE helps you find the calorie count that satisfies your hunger and keeps your weight stable.

**Basal Metabolic Rate**, or **BMR**, is the amount of energy (calories) your body expends while at rest. These are calories that allow your lungs to breathe, your heart to beat, and support your body's other resting activities.

Calculate your Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR) by using the Mifflin-St Jeor Equation below. (Do the calculations in parentheses first.)

## Men

---

$$10 \times [(weight^* \times 0.455)] + 6.25 \times [(height^{**} \times 2.54)] - [5 \times (age)] + 5 = BMR$$

## Women

---

$$10 \times [(weight^* \times 0.455)] + 6.25 \times [(height^{**} \times 2.54)] - [5 \times (age)] - 161 = BMR$$

**Physical Activity Level**, or **PAL**, is where you have the most control over your calories, and is based on how much you use your muscles. Most

*\*weight in pounds    \*\*height in inches*

people have a fairly consistent daily activity level.

Multiplying your BMR by the appropriate activity factor gives you your TEE. Be honest with yourself about your true activity level, since physical activity level (PAL) varies significantly from person to person.

Be prepared to make allowances in your calorie consumption when your activities differ from your routine.

Activity factors:

- 1.2 Sedentary
- 1.375 Light activity (*light exercise/sports 1 – 3 days/week*)
- 1.55 Active (*moderate exercise/sports 3 – 5 days/week*)
- 1.725 Very active (*hard exercise/sports 6 – 7 days/week*)
- 1.9 Extra active (*very hard exercise/sports + physical job or training 2x/day*)

**Example 1:** 37-year-old man, 6'3" (75 inches), 190 lbs, very active  
 $10 \times [(weight \times 0.455)] + 6.25 \times [(height \times 2.54)] - [5 \times (age)] + 5 = \text{BMR}$   
 $10 \times [(190 \times 0.455)] + 6.25 \times [(75 \times 2.54)] - [5 \times (37)] + 5 = \text{BMR}$   
 $10 \times [86.45] + 6.25 [190.5] - [185] + 5 = \text{BMR}$   
 $864.5 + [1190.6] - [185] + 5 = 1875 \text{ BMR}$   
 $\text{BMR} \times \text{PAL} = 1875 \times 1.725 = 3234$

This man needs about 3,200 calories to maintain his weight.

.....

**Example 2:** 48-year-old woman, 5'3" (63 inches), 140 lbs, active  
 $10 \times [(weight \times 0.455)] + 6.25 \times [(height \times 2.54)] - [5 \times (age)] - 161 = \text{BMR}$   
 $10 \times [(140 \times 0.455)] + 6.25 \times [(63 \times 2.54)] - [5 \times (48)] - 161 = \text{BMR}$   
 $10 \times [63.7] + 6.25 [160] - 5 (48) - 161 = \text{BMR}$   
 $637 + 1000 - 240 - 161 = 1236 \text{ BMR}$   
 $\text{BMR} \times \text{PAL} = 1236 \times 1.55 = 1916$

This woman needs about 1,900 calories to maintain her weight.

# Building Up to Your TEE Calories

If your TEE is higher than the calories you're eating at the end of the Transition phase, you can adjust your daily calorie count by adding 100 extra calories each week to your morning or afternoon meal until you reach your goal calories.

**Example:** Suppose your TEE says you need 1,900 calories a day to maintain your weight. At the end of the Transition phase, you're only eating about 1,200 calories. Here's how you would make up the difference:

Week 1 – add 100 calories to Lunch

Week 2 – add another 100 calories to Lunch

Week 3 – add another 100 calories to Lunch

Week 4 – add 100 calories to Mid-Morning Fueling\*

Week 5 – add 100 calories to Mid-Afternoon Fueling\*

Week 6 – add 100 calories to Breakfast

Week 7 – add 100 calories to Breakfast

Continue to monitor your weight and adjust your calories as necessary.

## Creating a Healthier Environment

From your home to your work environment to your car, you can set the stage for the cultivation of healthier habits. After a while, making healthy choices will become almost second nature.

### Plan Ahead

If you know what you are going to shop for and eat for meals each week, you are less likely to stray from your plan. Buy only the foods you will need, and only a week's worth.

### Get Rid of Your Trigger Foods

If you have a weakness for particular kinds of chips, cookies, or other high-fat foods, get rid of them. Give the food away to a neighbor or donate it

*\*Examples of Healthy Fuelings are listed on page 12.*

to a food bank. Eating food you don't need may be harmful to your health goals. If you must keep trigger foods in your home, keep them in a hard-to-reach area.

## Ask For the Support You Need

Tell friends, family, and others how important it is to you to stay healthy. When visiting, choose a seat away from the food if looking at it can be distracting to you. When choosing treats for your kids, pick something you don't like so you're less likely to "share."

## Keep Healthy Food Choices Available

Make sure you have Medifast Meals and other healthy choices available to grab immediately if a sudden craving strikes. Stock your fridge with nonfat yogurt, fresh fruits, and veggies that are already cut and ready to eat.

# Successful Weight Maintenance: The Medifast 3 & 3 Plan

The Medifast Jump Start Plan helped you get into a healthy habit of eating small, frequent meals of nutritious food. To help you maintain all the good, hard work you've done to get healthy, Medifast has developed the 3 & 3 Plan for lifelong weight maintenance and better health.

Three plus three equals six, and that's how many times you'll continue to eat each day, just like you did while on the Medifast Jump Start Plan:

- Breakfast
- Mid-Morning Fueling
- Lunch
- Mid-Afternoon Fueling
- Dinner
- Evening Fueling

You'll enjoy three smaller Lean & Green™-style meals, plus three (to five) Healthy Fuelings, depending on your calculated maintenance calories. (If your TEE is 1,200 calories, your Stay F.I.T. Plan is 3 & 2 (3 meals and 2 Healthy Fuelings).

Many members enjoy two to three Medifast Meals each day as their Healthy Fuelings. They're a convenient way to add portable, balanced nutrition to your day while keeping your calories within range.

## Eating Healthy

In Stay F.I.T., you will continue to eat fruits, low-fat dairy products, whole grains, and all vegetables, just as you did in Transition. Here are some tips on what to choose and what to avoid.



### GRAINS

#### ***Choose these foods...***

Whole-grain bread  
Brown rice  
Whole-wheat pasta  
Whole-grain flour  
Whole-grain breakfast cereal

#### ***...instead of these foods***

Refined white bread  
White rice  
Refined flour pasta  
Refined flour  
Sugary breakfast cereal

- ✦ Choose foods with whole oats, whole rye, or whole wheat listed first on the label's ingredient list.
- ✦ Look for breads with at least 3 grams of fiber in each slice.
- ✦ Be wary of foods labeled multi-grain, stone ground, 100% wheat, or bran. These are usually NOT whole-grain products.
- ✦ Choose foods with fewer added sugars, fats, or oils.

Examples of one grain serving:

- 1 cup of unsweetened cereal

- ½ cup cooked cereal
- ⅓ – ½ cup cooked brown rice
- ½ cup cooked whole-wheat pasta
- 1 slice whole-grain bread



## DAIRY

### **Choose these foods...**

Skim or 1% milk  
Fat-free/low-fat yogurt

### **...instead of these foods**

2% milk/whole milk  
Whole-milk yogurt

- ✦ Always choose fat-free or low-fat milk and yogurt. Sweetened milk products contain added sugar (which increases calories), so be mindful when consuming these. Choose sugar-free yogurt.

Examples of one dairy serving:

- 1 cup milk (skim, 1% low-fat, or 2%)
- 1 cup soy milk (low-fat or fat-free)
- 1 cup buttermilk (low-fat or fat-free)
- ½ cup evaporated milk (fat-free)
- ½ cup to 1 cup yogurt (fat-free or low-fat)



## PROTEIN (Meat/Meat Substitutes)

### **Choose these foods...**

Boneless, skinless chicken breast  
Lean ground beef  
(85 - 99% lean)  
Grilled, baked, or broiled meats

### **...instead of these foods**

Chicken thighs with skin  
Regular ground beef  
(70 - 80% lean)  
Deep-fried meats



## PROTEIN (Meat/Meat Substitutes)

- ✦ Choose lean cuts of beef and pork such as loin and round cuts.
- ✦ Choose skinless poultry. Bake, broil, poach, or grill, rather than fry.
- ✦ Boneless, skinless chicken breasts and turkey cutlets are the leanest poultry choices.
- ✦ Each week, eat at least two servings of fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, albacore tuna, mackerel, trout, or herring.
- ✦ Choose meat substitutes made with soybeans or textured vegetable protein, legume-type beans, egg whites, egg substitutes, or low-fat cheeses.
- ✦ Liver and other organ meats are high in cholesterol, so use sparingly.
- ✦ Processed meats like ham, sausage, and deli meats contain added sodium. Choose fresh cuts of meats instead of processed whenever possible.

Examples of one protein serving: 4 to 7 oz (cooked weight) of any protein choice below:

- Skinless chicken or turkey (white meat preferred)
- White fish (fresh or frozen cod, flounder, haddock, halibut, or trout)
- Tuna (fresh or canned in water)
- Salmon (smoked, fresh, or canned)
- Shellfish (clams, crabs, lobster, scallops, shrimp, or imitation shellfish)
- Duck, venison, buffalo, or ostrich
- 14 egg whites or an equivalent (2 cups of egg substitute)
- 1 cup cottage cheese (1% low-fat or fat-free)
- 4 oz cheese (low-fat or fat-free)

- Processed sandwich meats with one gram of fat or less per ounce (turkey, roast beef, or ham)
- USDA Select or Choice grades of lean beef trimmed of fat, such as round, sirloin, and flank steak; tenderloin; rib, chuck, or rump roast; steak (T-bone, porterhouse); ground round
- Lamb: roast, chop, or leg
- Veal: lean chop or roast
- 1 cup beans or lentils (cooked)



## FRUITS & VEGETABLES

Each day, strive for at least 2 servings of fruit (1 serving = 1 medium-sized piece of fruit or ½ cup cubed fruit or berries) and 3 servings of vegetables (1 serving = ½ cup cooked or raw vegetables or 1 cup raw salad greens).

If you're feeling especially hungry, go ahead and add more vegetables to your daily meal plan—you'll get added fiber and nutrition for a minimal calorie intake.

- ✦ Choose fresh, frozen, or canned fruits or vegetables without added fat or sauce.
- ✦ Enjoy all vegetables, even the ones that are higher in carbohydrates such as corn, peas, potatoes, and Brussels sprouts. All vegetables are healthy. They provide fiber that helps fill you up, are low in calories, and are packed with vitamins and minerals.
- ✦ Choose a variety of colors to get different nutrients.



## FATS

### **Choose these foods...**

Trans-fat-free margarine  
Oils high in omega-3s  
(canola and soybean oil)  
Peanut oil or olive oil  
Small amounts of nuts  
and seeds

### **...instead of these foods**

Butter  
Palm, palm kernel,  
or coconut oil  
Solid shortening  
Chocolate and high-calorie  
desserts

Examples of one fat serving:

#### **Monounsaturated fat choices**

---

- 1 tsp olive or canola oil
- 1/8 avocado
- 6 almonds or mixed nuts
- 1 Tbsp sesame seeds
- 8 large black olives
- 1/2 Tbsp peanut butter
- 10 peanuts
- 10 large pimento-stuffed green olives

#### **Polyunsaturated fat choices**

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- 2 Tbsp low-fat dressing
- 1 tsp regular mayonnaise
- 1 Tbsp reduced-fat mayonnaise
- 2 whole walnuts or 4 walnut halves
- 2 tsp Miracle Whip® salad dressing
- 1 Tbsp reduced-fat Miracle Whip®
- 1 Tbsp pumpkin seeds or sunflower seeds
- 1 tsp trans-fat-free margarine

#### **Saturated fat choices**

---

- 2 Tbsp cream (or half-and-half)
- 1 Tbsp cream cheese
- 3 Tbsp reduced-fat cream cheese
- 1 tsp butter
- 2 Tbsp sour cream
- 1 slice bacon

# Sample Meal Plan

After you find your specific calories, you can use the charts below to select foods to meet your individual calorie needs. Ask your Counselor for sample meal plans for additional TEEs, from 1,200 to 3,000.

Here's a sample meal plan for someone whose TEE is 1,500 calories.

## 1,500 CALORIES

- 3 Medifast Meals/Healthy Fuelings
- 2 Grain servings                      3 Vegetable servings
- 2 Fruit servings                        2 4-oz Protein servings
- 2 Dairy servings                         2 Fat servings

|                              | Food Group | Serving Size                         | Example                                 |
|------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Breakfast</b>             | Grain      | 1 serving                            | 1 cup ready-to-eat unsweetened cereal   |
|                              | Fruit      | 1 serving                            | ½ cup blueberries                       |
|                              | Dairy      | 1 serving                            | 1 cup skim or low-fat milk              |
| <b>Mid-Morning Fueling</b>   |            | 1 Medifast Meal or 1 Healthy Fueling |   |
| <b>Lunch</b>                 | Grain      | 1 serving                            | 1 slice whole-wheat bread               |
|                              | Vegetable  | 2 servings                           | 1 cup lettuce<br>½ cup tomato           |
|                              | Protein    | 1 serving                            | 4 oz sliced chicken                     |
|                              | Fat        | 2 servings                           | 2 Tbsp salad dressing<br>5 green olives |
| <b>Mid-Afternoon Fueling</b> |            | 1 Medifast Meal or 1 Healthy Fueling |   |
| <b>Dinner</b>                | Vegetable  | 1 serving                            | ½ cup cooked broccoli                   |
|                              | Fruit      | 1 serving                            | 1 medium apple                          |
|                              | Protein    | 1 serving                            | 4 oz baked flounder filet               |
|                              | Dairy      | 1 serving                            | 1 cup sugar-free yogurt                 |
| <b>Evening Fueling</b>       |            | 1 Medifast Meal or 1 Healthy Fueling |   |

# Healthy Fuelings

Here are examples of Healthy Fuelings that you can enjoy during the Stay F.I.T. phase. Calories range from 90 to 110 per fueling.

## Food group

## Healthy Fuelings



**Medifast Meal**

- Any Medifast Meal



**Fruit**

- 1 cup fresh cherries
- 1 medium apple
- 1 medium pear
- ½ cup seedless raisins
- 1-½ cups fresh raspberries
- 1 medium banana
- 1 cup sliced mango
- 1 cup seedless grapes
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- ½ cup dried unsweetened peaches
- 1 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 5 pitted dates
- 2 cups diced watermelon
- ½ cup dried apricots
- 3 plums
- 1 medium pink grapefruit
- 1 cup sliced kiwi
- 1-½ cup blackberries



**Vegetable**

- 2 cups baby carrots
- 1 cup fresh broccoli, 1 cup fresh cauliflower with 2 Tbsp low-fat ranch dressing
- 2 cups raw spinach, ¾ cup sliced cucumber, ½ cup cherry tomatoes, ½ cup chopped carrots, and 2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar



### Dairy

- 6 oz Chobani® nonfat plain greek yogurt or 4 oz nonfat flavored yogurt
- 1/2 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt
- 1 cup 1% milk
- 1 cup Silk® soymilk
- 8 oz prepared Yoplait® Frozen Smoothie



### Grain

- 5 slices Melba toast
- 1 cup Cheerios®, dry
- 3 cups plain air-popped popcorn (measured after popping)
- 1/2 cup cooked brown, long-grain rice
- 2/3 cup cream of wheat prepared with water
- 1 slice whole-wheat toast with 2 tsp strawberry preserves



### Nuts & Seeds

- 2 Tbsp sesame seeds
- 3 Brazil nuts
- 30 pistachios
- 3/4 oz trail mix
- 7 walnut halves
- 14 almonds
- 16 dry-roasted peanuts



### Protein

- 3/4 cup edamame
- 1-1/2 oz low-fat mozzarella cheese
- Deviled egg: Cut 1 hard-boiled egg in half, mix the yolk with 1 Tbsp hummus, and fill the egg white with the yolk mixture

**Combinations** **Fruit & dairy**

- 1 medium peach with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup nonfat plain yogurt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup blueberries with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup low-fat vanilla yogurt
- 1 cup diced honeydew melon with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup nonfat plain yogurt
- 1 cup pineapple chunks with 2 Tbsp whipped topping
- 1 cup fresh halved strawberries,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup blueberries, and 2 Tbsp light whipped topping

**Fruit & protein**

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup 1% low-fat cottage cheese with 5 medium strawberries
- 1 small apple with 1 tsp natural peanut butter
- 1 cup cubed cantaloupe with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup 1% low-fat cottage cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup 1% low-fat cottage cheese and 4 large olives

**Fruit & vegetable**

- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup pureed avocado, 1 Tbsp chopped tomatoes, 1 tsp lime juice

**Vegetable & protein**

- 1 medium tomato, sliced, sprinkled with 1 oz low-fat mozzarella cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup 1% low-fat cottage cheese with  $\frac{1}{2}$  medium tomato, sliced
- 5 4-inch celery sticks with 1 Tbsp natural peanut butter
- 1 cup raw portabella mushrooms with 1 oz low-fat grated mozzarella cheese
- 1 cup sliced eggplant with 1 oz low-fat mozzarella cheese melted on top
- $\frac{3}{4}$  oz tuna mixed with 1 tsp hummus and spread on 1 endive leaf
- 1 cup chopped broccoli with a 1 cubic-inch square of cheddar cheese melted on top
- 8 cherry tomatoes with 1 cubic inch of cheddar cheese

**Combinations**

- ½ cup sliced red bell pepper with 3 Tbsp hummus
- 3 fresh basil leaves, 1 medium tomato, sliced, and 3 Tbsp hummus
- 2 Tbsp hummus, 2 Tbsp avocado, and 3 large celery stalks

**Grain & vegetable**

- ½ cup cooked couscous with 2 medium celery stalks

**Grain & fruit**

- ½ cup dry bran cereal with ½ cup fresh blueberries

**Grain & dairy**

- 1 Tbsp low-fat granola with ½ cup nonfat plain yogurt

**Grain & protein**

- 1 slice whole-grain bread with 1 oz fat-free turkey breast
- 1 whole-wheat pita (4-inch diameter) with 1 Tbsp hummus spread on top
- 1 plain rice cake with 2 tsp natural peanut butter spread on top
- 1 oz cooked salmon with 3 RITZ® crackers
- ½ cup cooked whole-wheat spaghetti with 1 Tbsp grated parmesan cheese
- 1 whole graham cracker rectangle with 1 tsp natural peanut butter spread on top
- ½ whole-wheat English muffin, 1 slice of a medium tomato, and 2 Tbsp of shredded, fat-free mozzarella cheese
- 1 wedge Laughing Cow® Swiss cheese spread on 1 mini bagel (4-inch diameter)

**Nuts/seeds & vegetable**

- 10 almonds and 3 large celery stalks

**Protein & dairy**

- 1 large egg scrambled with 1 Tbsp skim milk and 1 Tbsp shredded cheddar cheese

# Stay F.I.T. Meal Tracker for Daily Calories

(copy this page to create your own Stay F.I.T. Journal)

*Check only the number of servings required for your specific meal plan.*

Medifast Meal or  
Healthy Fueling

Grain

Vegetable

Fruit

Dairy

Protein (4 oz each)

Protein (6 oz each)

Protein (7 oz each)

Fat

Water (8 oz glass)

# How to Visualize Portions



When we sit down to larger-than-necessary portions of food, it's all too tempting to clean our plates and take in too many calories. That's where the "Plate Method" comes in handy. Here's how it works:

## Step 1:

Take a 9-inch plate and visually divide it in half. In one half, place your meal's **vegetables** such as spinach, broccoli, cauliflower, green beans, romaine lettuce, salad greens, cabbage, carrots, tomatoes, cucumber, peppers, celery, beets, or radishes, alone, or in combination. About 1-½ cups of raw vegetables is considered a half plate serving size. One cup is about the size of your fist.

## Step 2:

Divide the other half of your plate in half again. Fill one quarter with your **lean protein** source: 4 to 7 oz of lean beef or pork, skinless turkey, chicken, fish, tofu, eggs, or cottage cheese. A 3-oz serving is about the size of a deck of cards or a computer mouse.

## Step 3:

Your **starches** go in the other quarter of your plate. Choose whole-grain or high-fiber versions of bread, cereal, rice, pasta, or tortillas. The serving size of your whole-grain or high fiber starch should be 1 piece of bread, 1 tortilla, or ½ cup if cereal, rice, or pasta.

## More "Plate Method" Tips

- You can have dairy and fruit "outside the plate." Choose low-fat or fat-free dairy products and fresh fruits or those packed in natural juice or water instead of added sugar or syrup.
- Slow down and be mindful by eating with your non-dominant hand.
- Take at least 30 minutes to finish your plate of food. Notice the taste,

texture, and pleasure that this food is bringing to you with each bite you take.

- If you are still hungry when your plate is empty, try eating more vegetables, or walk away from the table and reevaluate your hunger in 10 minutes.

## Proper Portion Sizes

When you can't measure how much food you're eating, you can still "guesstimate" healthy portions using these guidelines:

- 1 cup = one baseball
- ½ cup = one light bulb
- ¼ cup = one golf ball
- 2 Tbsp = two poker chips or half of a golf ball
- 1 Tbsp = one poker chip
- 1-½ oz of cheese = three stacked dice (about the size of your thumb)
- 3 oz of meat = a standard deck of playing cards
- 3 oz of any type of fish = one checkbook
- 1 muffin or biscuit (about 3 oz) = one hockey puck
- 1 oz of lunch meat = one compact disc
- 1 brownie = a dental floss package
- 1 slice of cake = a deck of cards
- 1 cookie = two poker chips

## Safeguarding Your Success

### At the Grocery Store

- Eat something healthy and filling before you go. Carry a bottle of

water to sip.

- Avoid samples of high-calorie foods. An occasional bite may be all right, but if you're tasting items in every section of the store, the calories can add up.



- Use a list and stick to it.
  - Be aware that store “merchandisers” are out to tempt you with unhealthy impulse items placed at eye level, at the ends of aisles, and in the checkout line.
  - Resist “deals” on unhealthy choices. It’s not a bargain at any price if it compromises your health!
- You don’t have to go up and down every aisle. Skipping the candy, cookie, snack, and soda aisles can save you time, money, and calories.
  - If it’s safe to do so, pick a parking spot at the far end of the lot. When you’re finished shopping, push your cart out to the car to load it yourself. It’s an easy way to add some activity to your shopping trip.

## At the Restaurant

Meals away from home pose risks for many people. Consult the *Medifast Dining Out Guide* for additional tips.

- Get your food “naked.” This means with sauces, dressings, or toppings absent or on the side.
- Stick with broth-based soup. Cream soups tend to be higher in fat and calories.
- Marinara, olive oil, or tomato-based sauces are your healthiest sauce choices.

- “Low-carb” does not necessarily mean “low-calorie” or “low-fat.” Be sure to read over the menu carefully to determine whether a “low-carb” item really is the best dietary choice.
- Keep portion sizes in check.
- Ask for a “to-go” container when the meal is delivered to your table and put half of the meal inside for tomorrow.
- Eat family-style, with food placed on the table in serving dishes so you and your dining companions can help yourselves.
- Share entrées, appetizers, and desserts. Half the dish means half the calories.
- Put your utensils down in between bites to help slow down your eating.
- Focus on companionship and conversation rather than the food.
- Have your plate cleared as soon as you finish eating a healthy portion.



## Advice from the “Super Losers”

The National Weight Control Registry (NWCR) is a national database, tracking people who have lost more than 60 lbs, on average, and maintained their weight loss for at least two years.

Here are some of the weight control strategies that work for them—and they can work for you, too!

- Eat a regular breakfast.
- Monitor your weight regularly (*at least once a week*).
- Spend up to an hour exercising each day to prevent weight gain and “yo-yo-ing.” The most popular weight control exercise is walking.

- Limit sedentary activity (limit television viewing to less than 10 hours per week).
- Follow a fat-reduced diet (24 - 27% calories from fat) and control overall calories.
- Eat small, frequent meals five or six times each day.
- Eat out fewer than three times each week, and limit yourself to one (or zero!) fast-food meal each week.

## Healthy Sleep

When it comes to adding both quality—and quantity—to your life, nothing beats healthy, refreshing sleep, which restores both the body and the mind.

If you chronically feel tired or irritable, find it hard to focus on work and other tasks, or depend on caffeine to function, you may be one of the 50 to 70 million people in the United States who are suffering from an accumulation of lost sleep.

Today's competitive, technology-driven 24-hour society sometimes downplays the importance of sleep. But not getting enough sleep may contribute to reduced productivity and performance, poor concentration, psychological stress, depression, hostility, a weakened immune system, and a higher risk of heart disease due to increased inflammation and other factors.

Inadequate sleep—less than seven hours a night—can also contribute to weight gain. When you're sleep-deprived, your body secretes more ghrelin (a hormone that increases appetite) and less leptin (a hormone that signals



you to stop eating when you're full).

Getting quality sleep can prevent junk-food cravings, too. Sleep loss can result in a deficit of the feel-good hormones dopamine and serotonin, causing an increased hunger for sugary, calorie-laden foods.

### **What is melatonin?**

Your body's natural sleep and wake cycles depend on chemical compounds such as melatonin at work in your body, helping to set and maintain your body's "inner clock."

As we age, our bodies produce less melatonin. This is one reason why older adults can find it hard to fall, or stay, asleep. Melatonin, when taken one hour prior to your normal bedtime, may help support healthy sleep patterns.

These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. These statements are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.

Tips for a restful sleep:

- Set a bedtime and stick to it to establish a uniform pattern.
- Set a routine so chaotic schedules don't interfere with sleep time.
- Get out of bed upon awakening.
- Limit caffeine.
- Eat responsibly and mindfully.
- Say no to naps.
- Decrease stimulation (light, noise, etc.) several hours before bedtime.
- Eliminate cell phone use at least two hours before bedtime.
- Minimize drinking fluids right before bedtime.
- Avoid exercise within two hours of bedtime.
- Take all medications as directed.
- Avoid alcohol within 90 minutes of bedtime.

- Resolve family issues.
- Make a to-do list of priorities and tasks for the next day.
- Journal at night if your thoughts are keeping you awake. Writing them on paper can put your mind to rest.

## Creating an Environment for Sleep

You can...

- Decorate your sleeping space in soft, calming pastel colors or deeper, restful shades.
- Make the room as light-proof as possible.
- Use aromatherapy (chamomile, jasmine, lavender, etc.).
- Choose a good mattress at the right level of firmness.
- Keep the room cool and ventilated.
- Reduce clutter.

## What Do I Do if the Weight Starts to Come Back?

When you gain weight, there's always a reason. Once you know what that reason is, you'll know what to do.

**Above all, don't panic:** Know that you're still in charge of your body and your choices. By choosing to confront weight gain while it's still manageable and taking appropriate action, you're expressing your commitment to life-long better health.

**Was it something you ate?** Think back on your choices for the last couple of weeks and be honest. Were you supporting your long-term health goals?

A few cookies won't make you gain five pounds, but they can trigger your brain's craving for sugar, fat, and salt, especially if you're used to eating too many such foods in the past.

What about **condiments**? Did you switch to a higher-fat salad dressing, drink a bit more alcohol than usual, or start adding milk or creamer to your coffee? Little changes over time can make a difference—your choices determine if the changes are positive or negative.

### Review your diet

- Are you basing your calories on your correct Total Energy Expenditure (TEE)?
- Are you eating proper portions?
- Are you concentrating on the most nutrient-dense/calorie-sparse choices in each food group (such as skim milk instead of 2% or whole, and broiled meat instead of fried)?

If you're not sure about the answers to some of these questions, you can get help and support from your Medifast Weight Control Centers Counselor.

### If You're Following Your Meal Plan as Directed

If you know for certain that your food choices haven't changed, yet you have still gained weight, consider **excess water** storage in the body as a possible cause.

Eating **excess salt** can cause a temporary water-weight gain of several pounds. So can certain stages of a woman's menstrual cycle. Are your ankles or fingers swollen? This can be a clue.

Has your **exercise** routine changed? When you're exercising less, you may be burning fewer calories, which can lead to weight gain.

You can also gain weight by **adding lean muscle** mass to your body through exercise. In this case, you may weigh more, but your measurements may stay the same or even decrease.

Finally, certain **medications** can cause weight gain. Check with your doctor and, if necessary, alter your caloric intake or your exercise regimen to counteract the weight gain caused by medications.

## Walking the Walk, Talking the Talk

Understand your individual weight changes. Do you notice particular patterns? Do you tend to weigh more at a particular time of month, after eating certain foods, or when you take medications?

Talk to your doctor about how factors (other than eating too many calories) can cause weight gain.

## Staying Healthy: Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviors

Congratulations: You've lost weight and a lot more. Over the past few weeks and months you've let go of old habits and acquired new ones.

### **From...**

- Eating three big meals each day
- Drinking sodas and fruit juice
- Sitting at the computer or TV
- Choosing calorie-dense foods



### **To...**

- Eating small, frequent meals
- Drinking water
- Becoming more active
- Choosing Lean and Green options

Now the task is to protect your accomplishment by maintaining these new patterns of behavior—and your healthy new weight.

# Avoiding Slips, Lapses, and Relapses

Old habits do not die—they wait for an opportunity to be revived! Often, that opportunity is stress. When you feel overwhelmed, those old habits can resurface. If left unchecked, they can take over again.

Some terms:

## **SLIP: a brief and small departure from a desired path**

- ✦ A “slip” is when you take a small step backward from pursuing your health goals, and may last only a moment or two.
- ✦ Often, a slip happens only in your mind when an old pattern of thinking is triggered. Suddenly, you’re thinking like you did in the “old days,” before you made positive changes.
- ✦ Even though a slip may seem like a small event, it can lead to major problems if not recognized.
- ✦ Pay attention to slips in your thinking, before they turn into LAPSES in your behavior.

## **LAPSE: a partial and temporary return to undesirable habits**

- ✦ A “lapse” is when some of your old habitual patterns return and you find yourself behaving in a way that you thought you’d conquered. A lapse can last a few minutes or a few days.
- ✦ A lapse is seldom a surprise, since slips in our thinking are what lead to lapses in behavior.
- ✦ Similar to slips, lapses can worsen if you don’t act quickly. Once the old behaviors become comfortable, they can lead to bad habits taking over.
- ✦ Before you know it, a lapse can turn into a full-blown RELAPSE.

## **RELAPSE: a return to undesirable habits**

- ✦ If you “relapse,” your old habits return and you’re back where you started. A relapse lasts more than a couple of days, and can be permanent.
- ✦ Relapsing is scary and discouraging. It’s frightening to see that the

changes you've worked so hard on have all but disappeared.

- ✦ You need to be cautious about recognizing relapses, since your brain may try to talk you into returning to the old habits. You might be thinking, "It's not that bad," or "Maybe my health goals aren't that important."
- ✦ Pay attention to the way you talk with yourself so that you don't just surrender.

### **COLLAPSE: a complete return to old habits (and then some)**

- ✦ A "collapse" is often a reaction to a relapse.
- ✦ When you recognize what has happened, you overreact, then make the problem worse by giving up all control over your actions, allowing yourself to "go overboard."
- ✦ Not only are the old habits back in full force, but you add some new problematic behaviors.

The whole process starts with a small slip in our thinking. How do we bring it to a halt?

## PAUSE, ASK, DECIDE: A Useful Technique for Getting Back on Track

The PAUSE, ASK, DECIDE (P.A.D.) technique can break the link between a trigger (such as a temptation or an unpleasant emotion) and behavior that you want to avoid. Here's an example of how it can work if you're suddenly confronted with an opportunity to make an unhealthy choice:

1. **PAUSE:** Wait for a moment, focus on taking a deep breath, and center yourself.



2. **ASK:** Ask yourself, What is the reality of the situation? What is my emotional state right and is it appropriate for the current situation? If I let this emotional state take over, will I be closer to my goal or further away? Could a less intense response increase the likelihood of a desirable emotional outcome? Am I really hungry? Why this food and why now? On a scale of 1-10, what level of hunger or anxiety am I experiencing right now?
3. **DECIDE:** Make a choice based on the long-term outcome you want. Whatever your choice, accept it, then continue on your healthy path.
  - Observe how you feel as you make your choice.
  - Determine the effectiveness of your choice. Would you choose to feel this way again?
  - If not, reform your plan, and remember how you would choose to respond if a similar situation arises in the future.

## What Else Can I Do to Minimize My Risk?

**Be aware of “triggers”** associated with your unhealthy habits. Then plan to either avoid that trigger or provide a healthier alternative.

- For example, if your office has pastries at the staff meeting every Friday and you find it hard to resist eating them, you can sit farther away from the food table or bring along a healthy snack to enjoy instead.
- If you find yourself hitting the fast-food drive-through on the way to picking up your kids, you can drive another route to avoid that spot and bring celery sticks to crunch on in the car.

**Remember your goals** and plan for events so you are not caught off guard.

**Enlist the help of others** by asking your Medifast Weight Control Centers Counselor and the significant people in your life for support and encouragement.

**Consistently monitor** your eating and activity habits so you do not drift too far off course before resuming healthy practices. Every obstacle you

encounter will teach you something, so if you have a setback, use it to reassess your goals and spring into corrective action.

Above all, **don't punish yourself by giving up.** You deserve to have the health you're creating for yourself. Remember, this is a lifelong journey that's measured in terms of progress, not perfection.

## Address Your Stress

Unhealthy stress plays a major role in weight gain and certain illnesses such as heart disease. Stress can also interfere with your ability to stay focused on a particular task.

Many people successfully lose weight only to find that when they get too stressed out, they fall back and resume old habits. That's why it's important to understand how to recognize and manage stress overload.

### Stress: It's Not All Bad

Not all stress is bad! Healthy stress can motivate us to take action when we need to, and adds excitement and energy to our lives.

The problem arises when the stress level becomes high enough to begin to interfere with how well our brain works. This level is different for everyone; some people can deal with a lot more stress than others.

Think of stress on a scale from 1 to 10 (1 is no stress; 10 is completely stressed-out). Most people find that a stress level of 1 to 3 isn't enough to motivate them. However, once stress reaches the 8 to 10 level, they can't think clearly.

Most of us operate at our peak when stress levels are in the 4 to 7 range. In sports psychology, that's called being "in the zone."

### Stress: Monitor it, Manage it

When you are experiencing stress, answer the following questions:

- How stressed am I (on the 1 to 10 scale)?
- Is my stress level appropriate for the situation?
- Can I still think clearly?
- What level of stress would be appropriate or useful for this situation?

Knowing your individual “tipping point” is critical to managing stress. If you know that you lose your ability to think clearly when you get to an 8 or a 9, learn to start managing stress when you get to a 7.

By being proactive and monitoring your stress levels throughout the day, you can better ensure that you’re staying “in the zone.”

## Steps for Un-stressing

When you realize that your stress level is getting too high, stop and take a deep breath ... and take a calm, unbiased look at what’s going on. Is it something you can’t change, like the weather, a flight that’s delayed, or a family member’s illness? Or is it something you can do something about, like the stress caused by running behind schedule or spending too much time with negative people?

If you can’t change the situation right away, focus on how you are interpreting the event. Realize that you’re in charge of the choices you make.

Stress can also trigger poor eating habits. If you feel like this happens to you, work on developing some alternative strategies—like drinking a glass of cold water, calling a friend, or taking a walk outside—instead of reaching for the cookies when your feeling stressed.

## Stressed? Move it!

Physical activity is a great way to manage stress and can help protect you from weight gain when life gets crazy.

Walking, working out, practicing yoga, and other physical activities can also relieve tension and can distract you from negative thoughts, lift your mood,

and help clarify your thinking.

Cultivating the healthy habit of regular physical activity (at least 30 minutes each day) can lower the effect of stress on your body and mind, while increasing your resistance to stress-aggravated illnesses.



## Watch Your Language: Healthy Self-talk

Everyone has an inner dialogue—in other words, we talk to ourselves (though perhaps not out loud). We are continuously asking ourselves questions, making comments, talking things through, and making decisions.

The language we use during these inner discussions may be helpful, or it may be hurtful. Be aware of the language you use, the “tone” of your words, and the kind of questions you ask yourself. Make sure your inner voice is that of a supportive friend, not a judgmental bully.

***You cannot win the battle for better health if there are “enemy outposts” in your head!***

A good rule of thumb is: **If you wouldn’t say certain things aloud to your best friend, don’t say them silently to yourself.**

### The Power of Positive Questions

**When you ask yourself good questions, you’ll get good answers.** The questions that you ask yourself determine the focus of your thoughts.

Think of how you’d answer not-so-good questions like these:

- Why do bad things ALWAYS happen to me?
- What’s WRONG with them?

- What's WRONG with me? Why can't I be perfect?

Now, think about the different answers you get when you rephrase them to be positive:

- What's RIGHT with me?
- What's GOOD about this situation?
- What can I learn from this?

**Here's the most important question of all: "What can I do—right now—that is in my best long-term interest?"**

Our words can move us toward the positive outcomes we want. We can actually decide, first thing upon awakening, what kind of day we'd like to have.

You can "set an emotional agenda" by consciously deciding on the emotions you want to experience throughout the day, such as love, appreciation, respect, and acceptance. You can then ask yourself:

- What actions can I take NOW to increase the likelihood of experiencing these feelings?
- Which of my behaviors are most likely to produce these feelings?

When you ask these questions, and you respond sincerely, listen carefully to the answers that first come to mind. These answers can direct your behavior throughout the day.

Throughout the day, before you take any action, ask yourself:

- If I take this action, what will be the likely emotional outcome?
- Is this behavior/action consistent with the feelings I want?
- How will I feel after the fact? An hour from now? Tomorrow?

You can monitor your feelings each day and decide, one action at a time, if your behavior is helping or hurting your progress.

# Free Support Materials

The following resources can provide you with welcome support as you begin your Stay F.I.T. phase, and they're all FREE. Ask your Counselor for your copy of:

## Medifast Exercise Guide

Exercise is an important ingredient in your weight-maintenance program, and Medifast Weight Control Centers makes it easy.

## Medifast Dining Out Guide

Helpful suggestions and guidance for enjoying your favorite restaurants—while preserving your healthy weight.

## Other Resources

- Meal Plans ranging from 1,200 calories to 3,000 calories
- Shopping list including How to Read Nutrition Labels
- Spice Chart
- Cooking Methods

*Remember, living a healthy life is a journey, not a destination. Day-by-day, as you become accustomed to healthy eating—along with other habits of health—you'll be amazed at your power to create health, hope, and happiness in your life.*



  
WEIGHT CONTROL CENTERS.®

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