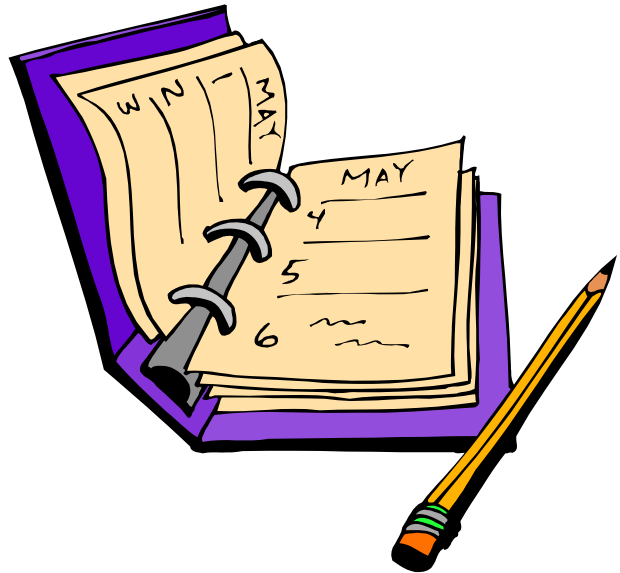




Using a Food Diary

Research shows that people who keep a food and exercise diary are often more successful at weight management than those who don't keep track of what they eat. Your diary doesn't need to be fancy - any notebook, journal or pad of paper will do. Food diaries help you become more aware of your eating and activity habits, and problem areas. They also give you a basis from which to plan changes. They help keep you focused on your goals and allow you to look back and see how things have changed over time. This can be very motivating. They also encourage you to make conscious choices about what you eat and do - writing it down gives you the chance to think twice before you act. This is one of the most useful things you can do to help you control your weight.



Start by writing down everything you eat and drink over the day. It's hard to remember what you've eaten at the end of the day, so try to record things as you go. It can also help to make a note of any thoughts or feelings linked to eating, especially if you find you often eat for comfort or when you're not actually hungry. (You may want to record your activity here too.)

Example of how to fill in your diary:

Time	Food and Drink	Thoughts
8am	Glass of orange juice	Morning rush out the door
9am	Chocolate muffin, large coffee	Stressed, need something sweet

It can take a little while to get used to and comfortable with it all. Sometimes it may seem like a waste of time, but it really is worth the effort. If things are going well, you may find you only need to keep a food diary now and then, or if your weight loss goes off track. Studies also show that people who successfully keep their weight off, continue to monitor what they eat and how active they are in some way. This could be with some form of diary, or in their head. It will be a matter of finding out what works best for you.

Source: www.eatright.org

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