

The Very Low Calorie Diet

Preparing your own meals

Your doctor has asked you to follow a Very Low Calorie Diet for 3 weeks before your surgery. This diet will make your liver smaller and help make your surgery safer.

The meal plan in this handout, along with exercise and support from your dietitian, will help you lose several pounds before your surgery.

Getting Started

You may want to prepare your own meals for the 3 weeks you are on the Very Low Calorie Diet (VLCD). The serving ideas listed below will make it easier for you to customize your own diet. Use these guidelines to meet your nutrition needs for 1,000 calories and at least 60 grams of protein a day.

Keep track of what you eat in a journal. Or, you can use the “My Fitness Pal” app.



Follow the guidelines in this handout when preparing your own meals on the Very Low Calorie Diet.

Daily Servings

Every day, you should eat:

- **Nonfat milk or other dairy products:** 3 servings

1 serving = 1 cup nonfat milk, 6 ounces nonfat yogurt, 4 ounces nonfat cottage cheese, or 1 ounce low-fat cheese

- **Lean or low-fat meat or meat alternatives:** 3 servings

1 serving = 1 ounce lean meat (beef, turkey, pork, or fish), 1 egg, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup tofu, 2 tablespoons peanut butter, or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked beans

- **Starch (bread, rice and other grains, pasta, potato, and cereals):** 3 servings

1 serving = 1 slice bread, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup rice, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pasta, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup hot or cold cereal, or 3 ounces potato

- **Vegetables:** 2 servings (non-starchy vegetables such as broccoli, greens, mushrooms, cucumber)

1 serving = ½ cup cooked vegetables or 1 cup raw vegetables

- **Fruit:** 2 servings

1 serving = 1 cup fruit or 1 small to medium whole fruit

- **Fat:** 1 serving

1 serving = 1 teaspoon oil or mayonnaise, 1 teaspoon butter, or 1 tablespoon salad dressing

Sample Menu

Breakfast

- ¾ cup cereal
- ½ banana
- ½ cup nonfat milk

Lunch

- ½ turkey sandwich:
 - 1 slice whole grain bread
 - 1 slice turkey
 - lettuce and tomato
- 1 small apple

Afternoon Snack

- 4 ounces nonfat cottage cheese

Dinner

- 2 ounces chicken thigh
- ⅓ cup rice
- ½ cup cooked vegetables
- small salad

Evening Snack

- 6 ounces nonfat yogurt

Other Guidelines

- You will need to drink at least 64 ounces (8 cups) of fluids each day.
- Start taking your daily vitamins and minerals:
 - 1 multivitamin/mineral with iron
 - 1,500 mg calcium (750 mg twice a day)
 - 2,000 IU vitamin D

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Weight Loss Management
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