

... MARCH 2008 ...

QUICK TAKES



There are no miracle diets. To reach and maintain a healthy weight, you need to eat nutritious, satisfying food, stay active and control portions.

- According to the 2005 Dietary Guidelines, calories are the most important factor for weight management — not the proportions of fat, carbohydrates and protein you consume.
- Counting calories and practicing portion control may be the most effective weight loss methods — especially when used together, suggests a 2005 study from Pennsylvania State University.
- Successful weight loss begins with a realistic goal. If you're overweight or obese, consider a goal of losing 5 to 10 percent of your body weight over a period of up to six months.

Staying on Track:
Stick to your weight management plan

Having trouble sticking to your weight-management plan? Learn to identify some of the common mistakes that can stop a diet in its tracks.

Meal Skipping

Skipping meals is one of the most common causes of diet lapses. "A lot of dieters skip breakfast and lunch, and think that's great -- but by dinnertime, they're starving," explains registered dietitian Lisa Himmelfarb. "The body also wants to metabolically catch up and make up for what it didn't get all day. So it's really hard not only to resist temptation foods but also to refrain from eating too much."

Environment

At work and at home, your routine can trigger a lapse. Mindless eating, or eating while multitasking, is a hard habit to break. Don't keep tempting foods in the house. In your work environment, it may be more difficult to avoid snack foods, but you can scope out healthy choices in and around your building or in the company cafeteria. Keep air-popped popcorn, pre-cut veggies or fresh fruit on hand for low-calorie, nutritious snacks.

Special Occasions

Nothing strikes dread in dieters like dinner parties, birthdays and worst of all, the holidays. When tempting treats are in abundance, self-control tends to go out the window. "November through January is a difficult time for people. They feel out of control," Himmelfarb says. Attempting to deprive yourself will just set you up to fail. "Offer to bring something healthy, like a veggie platter. Load up half your plate with that healthy food, then little tastes of other things

Emotional Eating

Some food cravings may be caused by deeper emotional issues. "People look to food for unmet psychological hunger," Himmelfarb notes. Stress, anger, boredom or feeling "starved" for affection can bring on the urge to overeat. "If it's a random time of day and you're feeling overwhelmed and chips or cookies are calling, just take a breather to sort through what you're feeling." Recording what you eat every day in a food journal can help you recognize and track these emotional cravings.

Living by the Scale

Another unconscious way to undermine your motivation is to obsess over weighing yourself. Stepping on the scale every day can be counterproductive; especially when you don't see the numbers go down right away. If you set a smart goal of losing one to two pounds per week, you won't see a big change on a daily basis. Try to emphasize the positive aspects of your new eating plan such as "I'm feeling more energetic." or "I'm able to walk up stairs more easily."

Prevent Pitfalls:

Tips to avoid a diet slip-up before it happens

Quick, what's the difference between a "lapse" and a "relapse?" When it comes to weight loss, there's a big difference!

A lapse is an isolated slip-up; you make a mistake and veer off your diet. It happens. A relapse is when you lose control and fall back to your old habits. The key is to avoid letting lapses go into relapses. Here are some strategies for keeping yourself in check:

Choose Satisfying, Balanced Meals

Make sure your diet includes a diverse variety of appealing healthy foods. Make every taste bud in your mouth happy," suggests registered dietitian Lisa Himmelfarb. "People often say, 'After dinner I always crave sweets.' But if they had pineapple chunks in their salad, they might not have that sweet craving afterward."

Don't Fear Your Favorite Foods

Plan moderate ways to indulge in your favorite foods. "Maybe you can't have a pint of Ben & Jerry's in your refrigerator," says Himmelfarb. "But you can go to the scoop shop and order a child-size cup." Managed

splurges can help prevent a spontaneous binge that takes you off your diet for good.

Eat Mindfully

Eat only when you're truly hungry and fully focused on the food. "The clearest red flag that signals you're going astray is mindless eating," declares Himmelfarb. "That's why it's so important to sit down and really smell, taste and enjoy the food — be completely present."

Prepare for High-Risk Situations

Plan for times when you are vulnerable:

- When you're tired and hungry in the afternoon and a co-worker offers doughnuts, it's a lot easier to say no if you have some healthy snacks on hand.
- If you're going to a family celebration where there's a big spread laid out, give yourself a small plate and plan to keep moving to avoid overeating.

The key at these times is know your weaknesses, remind yourself of your goals and have a plan in place that helps you get through.

Oven-fried Chicken

Makes: 4 servings | 50 minutes

Ingredients

No-stick cooking spray
1 cup fresh breadcrumbs
1 teaspoon granulated onion
1/2 teaspoon granulated garlic
1/4 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon paprika
1/4 teaspoon salt
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1/2 cup nonfat buttermilk or plain yogurt
4 bone-in chicken breasts (about 8 oz each), skin removed

Preparation

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Spray a small baking sheet with cooking spray.
2. In a shallow dish, combine breadcrumbs, granulated onion, granulated garlic, paprika, oregano, salt and pepper.
3. With a pastry brush or the back of a spoon, "paint" chicken breasts with buttermilk or yogurt. Roll in the seasoned breadcrumb mixture and place on the prepared pan. Bake until browned and crisp, about 45 minutes.

A quick-coat of buttermilk or yogurt followed by a roll in seasoned breadcrumbs are the only preparation steps you need to prepare this delectable chicken.



Photo Source: ©Ellen Silverman/Matria Healthcare

Nutrition Facts: Per Serving – 256 Calories, 4.6g Fat, 1.4g Saturated fat, 0g Trans fat, 31.0g Protein, 21g Carbohydrate, 1.3g Fiber, 420mg Sodium