

7 questions to choose the right eating plan for you, right now

CHOOSING YOUR FOOD PLAN:

Please honestly answer questions 1 through 4:

1. What is your current health status? I am overweight, and/or I have one or more of the following: metabolic syndrome, pre-diabetes, diabetes (either type 1 or 2), heart disease, enlarged liver, and/or I have had a stroke.

A. False B. True

2. How do you do with sweets/carbs/junk food? Tally up how many of the following are true for you. (Or more often true than not.)

Note: "Sweetened drinks" include anything sweetened with sugar, corn syrup, agave syrup, OR artificial sweeteners: lattes, pop, sweet tea, and energy drinks. Also, most liqueurs or alcoholic cocktails with a sweet or sour taste: Amaretto, Kahlua, Bailey's, margarita, mojito, Moscow mule, sangria, etc. Also beer, because of the maltose.

- I plan to eat just a small portion of a treat and end up eating the whole package/thing.
- I crave simple carbs daily: sweetened drinks, chips, cereal, rice, pasta, bread, granola bars, etc.
- I'm likely to over-eat sweet or starchy foods.
- I'll eat large quantities of sweets or carby foods even if I'm not particularly hungry,
- I turn to carby food or drinks (sweetened drinks, beer) when I'm feeling emotional — up and/or down.

Check your total:

A. 0 – 1 out of the 5 B. 2 – 5 out of the 5

3. What are you drinking? I drink sweetened beverages most or all of the day, and/OR I drink beer or sweetened alcohol at least five days a week. (Sweetened beverages = same list as in question 2.)

A. False B. True

4. What are you eating? This best describes how I'm currently eating most of the time:

- A. No real restraints, or alternating between severe restriction and *the-hell-with-it!*
- B. Low-fat, restricted calories
- C. Lots of fruit, grains, potatoes, and beans; less meat, protein, and veggies
- D. Low-carb, little to no sugar, few veggies
- E. Low-carb, little to no sugar, lots of veggies

Scoring so far:

Following is a list of possible food boundaries you can choose from, divided into Level 1 and Level 2. Which level you choose from depends on how you answered the questions above.

Questions 1-3:

If you answered B to question 1 and B to either or both of questions 2 and 3, you should start with one or two items in Level 1. After this round, come back and add another option or two. Small steps add up! (You can skip ahead to read Level 1 now.)

If you answered A or B to question 1, but you answered A to both questions 2 and 3, read on regarding Question 4....

Question 4:

If you answered A to question 4, start with one or two items from Level 1 for this round, then plan on adding more for your next phase.

If you answered B or C to question 4, you should start with two or more items in Level 1, then plan on adding more for your next phase.

If you answered D to question 4, you can focus on adding more non-starchy vegetables to all your meals, and if you like, also choose one or more options from Level 2.

If you answered E to question 4, select one or more options from Level 2.

Check off the items you'd like to tackle now. You can always add others after this round:

Level 1:

Nutrition isn't just about what you don't eat: it's also very much about what you *do* eat that adds to your health. So don't overlook these first items that involve adding something you're not currently doing. They're all designed to satisfy nutritional cravings your body has (even if you're not aware of them), and they help balance your blood sugar, which will also reduce sweet and junk food cravings.

If you're not eating low carb now, aim for a visual between protein and carbs in all meals and snacks

If you're eating low fat now, add protein and healthy fats to your meals and snacks

Add non-starchy veggies to your meals and snacks (all veggies except regular potatoes, winter squash, and starchy beans)

Eliminate anything made with white flour (this includes anything battered and fried)

Eliminate sweets and all forms of sugar in food and drinks* (corn syrup, dextrose, maltose, etc. See Other names for sugar.)

Level 2:

Nutrition isn't just about what you don't eat: it's also very much about what you *do* eat that adds to your health. So don't overlook these first two items that involve adding something you're not currently doing. They're designed to satisfy nutritional cravings your body has (even if you're not aware of them).

Add protein, greens, and/or healthy fat to your breakfast, if lacking

Add protein, greens, and/or healthy fat to your snacks and other meals, if lacking

Eliminate all wheat, corn, and soy

Eliminate most or all dairy (many people find this helps with skin, gut, and joint issues)

Reduce or eliminate alcohol

Or choose **one** of the following:

Transition to a "real food" plan. Eliminate all super-processed foods, stick to whole foods (meat, eggs, fish, veggies, fruit, dairy). More info in the notes.*

Follow the Mediterranean eating style*

Follow a strict Paleo approach* (If you do this for 30 days with no breaks, that's "Whole30".)

Define your modified Paleo plan* (see blog post for details)

Another way of eating that suits your particular health needs right now. E.g, low histamine, AIP, low FODMAP, etc. (see blog post for details)

See next page for questions 5-7. (They're simpler!)

CHOOSING YOUR TIME PLAN

Now, thinking about your temperament, and how much time you have in your calendar for the coming weeks, answer the following...

5. Will you allow for breaks, or not? Answer the following:

– I tend to be more successful and less stressed when I:

___ A. Follow clear-cut rules all of the time, eliminating the need to make decisions as I go.

___ B. Follow rules most of the time, with a few loopholes built in so I don't feel deprived.

If you answered B, decide which ONE of the following patterns you'll adhere to for this round:

___ For now, I am just going to work on changing one meal a day, seven days a week, and that meal will be: _____.

___ I will stay in my food boundaries all the time except for one day a week, and that day will be: _____.

___ I will stay in my food boundaries, except for three meals a week, and those will always be: _____.

___ I will stay in my food boundaries, except for one meal a day on weekdays. That meal will be: _____.

___ I will stay in my food boundaries, except when eating out with others, and then I will modify it by: _____ (Limit this to five meals a week, at most)

6. What will your starting and ending dates be?

Note: the 15-day option won't give you radical results, but it might be a good time period for baby-stepping your way to a bigger goal. For example, a

good strategy would be to add protein and healthy fats to your meals for two weeks before you start eliminating sugar.

- I would like to commit to this way of eating for:

___ 15 days (if you're choosing this option, you'll see more benefits if you follow your boundaries 24/7, with no breaks)

___ 21 days

___ 30 days

___ 40 days

– I am going to start on: (date) _____

– So my end date will be: (date) _____

7. What's your end game? If you're doing any of the items that involved adding something healthy to your diet, there's no reason to quit that. If you're doing any items that involved eliminating something from your diet, you can choose at the end whether to continue that strictly, to drop that restriction, or to create some new boundaries for yourself that keep the not-so-healthy food in sensible doses.

(See blog post for more details.)

My end game is:

Put a note in your calendar now for your starting date. Also write one on your ending date, reminding yourself what your end game / next step is. Review and learn from your struggles and successes, and make a new plan for your next round, or for life forever.

See full blog post at:
ohthatstasty.com/health-info/perfect-eating-plan-for-you

It includes more details, and links to helpful resources.