

too **Busy** to **Diet**

The Best Nutrition Guide for Busy People

Second Edition

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Too Busy to Diet *The Best Nutrition Guide for Busy People*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	vii
Section 1: Creating A Plan For Healthy Eating	1
Healthy Eating: Eat Healthy to Stay Healthy	
Plant-Based Eating	
Mediterranean Way	
Vitamins and Minerals: Nutrients for Optimal Health	
Brain-Gut Connection	
Section 2: Losing and Maintaining Weight	43
Weighing Your Best	
Fad Diet: Sudden, Quick Spreading, and Short-Lived	
Exercise: Key to Fitness Health, and Happiness	
Mindful Eating	
Section 3: Digging In On Nutrition	79
Cholesterol And Dietary Fat Intake: Get to the Heart of the Matter	
Sodium: Naturally Salty	
Fiber Fare	
Calcium: Allows Us to Stand	

Prebiotics And Probiotics: Maintaining Gut Health

Super Foods

Sugar: A Hidden Danger?

Sweeteners: Different Types of Sugar

Section 4: Quick and Easy Food Planning and Preparation . 159

Meal Planning: It's All About the Choices

25 Time Saving Tips For Meal Planning and Preparation

Shopping

13 Shopping Tips

New Grocery Shopping Trends

Farmer's Markets

Section 5: Meal Management 179

Breakfast

Bagged Breakfasts

Lunch and Dinners

Bagged Lunch and Dinners

Easy Meals: The Quick of It:

Quick Meal Preparation

- Meal Kits
- Crock Pots
- Mason Jars
- Pan Meals
- Frozen meals
- Easy Dinner Meal Recipes

Dining Out

The Skinny On Snacks

Snacks and Calories

Popular snacks

Section 6: Eating on the Move 237

Super-Size: Less is Best

Travel Eating

Vacations

Holidays

Office Foods: Food Push At Work

Vending Machines

Beverages: Just for the Taste of Them

Smoothies: Blended Not Stirred

Caffeine: No Espresso, Depresso

Alcohol

Digging the Bar Facts

Pizza: When You Knead the Dough

Popcorn: A Perfectly Crunchy Snack

Sushi: Dancing To a Different Tuna

Carnival, Movies, Fairs

Conclusion

Section 7: Appendix 305

APPENDIX A: Sample Meal Plans for Weight Loss and Weight Maintenance

Appendix B: Month of Meals

Appendix C: Suggested Resources

Appendix D: References

Acknowledgements

About the Authors

INTRODUCTION

“So much to do, so little time.”

If those words sound familiar, then this book is for you who packs a lot into a typical day. Never before has so much attention been focused on what we eat and how it impacts our health. The evidence is overwhelming that good nutrition and an exercise program can help you stay healthy and prevent disease. But how can we fit good nutrition and exercise into days packed with demands and responsibilities?

During our 80 years of combined nutrition experience we have counseled many individuals who struggle with incorporating healthy eating into their busy lives. Some may have had a recent medical diagnosis that requires diet and lifestyle changes. Others are concerned that their weight and lack of exercise may create health issues. Often, they are uncertain about how to begin making changes to improve their health.

From a personal perspective, Monica and I have collaborated on many projects over the years. Our book reflects many of the reoccurring nutrition concerns our clients face. During our own life experiences as working wives and moms (Monica- a single mom) we have experienced many of the same challenges. Now as grandparents we see many of our nutrition issues reflected in the lives of our busy adult children and their families. Juggling long work hours, children’s demanding

school and social/activity schedules can be a challenge for the most motivated parent and requires making healthy eating a priority.

In our book, we have addressed some of the barriers to healthy eating including processed and convenience foods, frequency of eating out, perceived lack of time to plan, shop and cook. Quick and efficient meal planning, shopping, and preparation remains a must.

We also retained our belief that healthy eating is enjoyable and when possible a family event. Our book also shares ways to handle special eating situations so one is confident dealing with a variety of eating situations.

Combining a busy lifestyle with healthy eating and exercise can be a challenge but is not impossible. Some of the same skills you use to achieve balance in your typical day can be used to balance your health and nutrition. Planning and organizing are the key ingredients, so the most overwhelming tasks become easy and routine.

Some of the questions you must ask yourself when beginning this book are:

- Am I ready to make changes to allow better eating habits for me and my family?
- Do I feel that making these changes will improve my health, allow me to feel better and give me more energy?
- Am I concerned that I will have difficulties overcoming challenges that healthy eating and exercising present?

After reading this book and making specific changes you should be used to the process. At this point:

- The practices presented have become a part of your daily life.
- You have incorporated the book's solutions to keep a routine.
- You have occasions when you lapse, but you able to get back on track easily.

You asked. We've listened. Over the years we've listened carefully to you – our patients, family and friends. We know living healthy is a top priority. We've tried not to nag or preach, knowing the time pressures and that your daily lives and health are intrinsically intertwined.

The patchwork of nutrition topics and easy food solutions reflect your concerns. Our topics will allow you to learn more about healthy eating, weight control, exercise, eating out, and meal planning and preparation. These also include easy meals and snacks, ways to shop more easily, and how to deal with high calorie beverages and popular foods.

Remember, healthy eating can be as easy as a quick trip to a local grocery store. Take some time out to plan a week of meals and snacks. Shopping shouldn't take more than 15 to 20 minutes, and cooking a meal no more than 30 minutes. Also included are easy meals and snacks, ways to shop more easily, and how to deal with high calorie beverages and popular foods.

No more "I'm too busy to diet. We hope you enjoy this book as much as we enjoyed writing it.

Bon Appétit!

Jackie and Monica

SECTION



CREATING A PLAN FOR
HEALTHY EATING

HEALTHY EATING: EAT HEALTHY TO STAY HEALTHY

Let the food be the medicine and the medicine be the food”

– Hippocrates

The connection between the foods we eat and our health was recognized as far back as Hippocrates. Now there has never been a time when we have been so encouraged to take charge of our health by eating healthy and exercising more. Our diets should be made up of a variety of foods, emphasizing fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. There is no mystery to weight loss and management. The key strategy for losing weight has never changed: decrease calorie intake and increase physical activity. Drive-thru, convenience foods, and take-out foods are all around. Preparing fresh, less processed foods at home is done less and less. Fast and easy recipes are available, but it takes planning and shopping. If planned correctly, healthy eating can save you time, calories, and money.

When interviewed, individuals who spent much of their time “on the run” identified the availability of nutritious meals and snacks as a top priority. They acknowledged that traveling and eating out can interfere with eating healthy and maintaining a healthy body weight. Eating-on-the-go has led to an overweight epidemic we face today in America. We battle large portion sizes and calorie-dense foods that

are easily accessible and often inexpensive; in most cases, we lose the battle and give in.

We are all moving less than ever. Many of us who have cars don't even think about walking to errands. Buses pick us up at the station and deposit us at our workplace, stealing the opportunity to walk. Some individuals complain of what's called "cubicalitis" or "computeritis", which in turn, limits our chances to move about during the workday. Down time is often spent at a computer or watching television. Too few of us meet the recommended 30 minutes or more of daily exercise. Because of this, every extra flight of stairs or 15 minutes of walking the family dog can really count.

CREATE A HEALTHY EATING PLAN

The path to healthy eating requires planning, shopping, and reading food labels to avoid eating whatever is in reach when in a rush. Choosing healthy foods requires a little effort. However, with practice, nutritious foods can quickly be incorporated into any lifestyle.

4 STEPS TO CREATING A HEALTHY MEAL PLAN

1. **Plan:** Spend a few minutes once a week to map out a week's worth of dinner menus. Menus can be repeated. As you become more proficient at meal planning, try planning a month of menus to avoid repetition. See Menu Planning Chapter.
2. **Shop:** Create a weekly shopping list. Busy professionals often complain they don't have nutritious foods in the house. Plan and use a list. A trip to the grocery store will take less than 30 minutes. When writing a grocery list, add some low-calorie convenience snacks and meals as "back-ups". This will save time, money, and calories when you are too tired to prepare a meal. See Shopping Chapter.

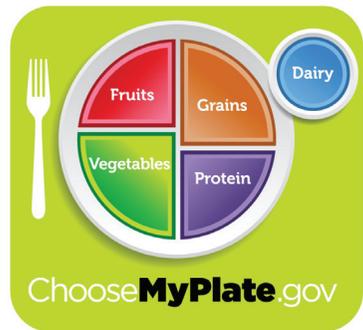
3. **Read:** Labels to avoid high-calorie foods. Some convenience foods have large amounts of sodium, fat, and calories that can be easily avoided by reading the label.
4. **Cook:** A simple yet nutritious meal can be prepared in less than thirty minutes. Cooking puts you in control of the quality or what you eat. Cooking can save calories and money, and often taste better than prepared foods. Purchase a cookbook with quick and easy menu ideas and recipes and get hooked on cooking. Check out our Easy Dinner Chapter.

Deciding to eat healthy and to exercise regularly is done by choice rather than chance. The first step in embarking on a healthy lifestyle or maintaining existing healthy lifestyle practices is recognizing its importance. Make a commitment to incorporate healthy choices and make good health a priority. The *January 2011 AND Journal* reports that diets high in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, poultry, fish, and low-fat dairy foods may affect the quality of life and mortality in the older adult populations. This study showed that the adults following this type of diet had more healthy years of life. Once the decision is made, it is important to stay the course. Weight loss or weight maintenance is not a week-long commitment, it is life-long. Consistency with a diet plan is crucial in order to obtain the desired results.

MY PLATE

The new icon, MyPlate, recently replaced MyPyramid, used for over 20 years. MyPlate was introduced to help Americans make easier food choices to ensure that they are achieving a healthy diet.

MyPlate can be found on the website: ChooseMyPlate.gov.



With the new website, the USDA emphasizes:

- Enjoying food but eating less
- Avoiding oversized portions
- Making half of your plate fruits and vegetables
- Drinking water instead of sugary drinks
- Switching to fat-free or low-fat milk
- Comparing the sodium content of foods
- Making half of your grains consumed whole grains
- Considering empty calories if you choose solid fats and added sugar

MyPlate is a new tool to assist in making daily food choices based on recommended servings of the five different food groups. Registered dietitians welcome this change since most dietitians have been using the plate-teaching tool for years. In both our practices, we are used to giving our patients paper plates to formulate their food plan easily. The MyPlate method continues to use the five-food group approach because most Americans continue to fail to get adequate amounts of fiber, the vitamins A, C, and E, and the minerals calcium, magnesium, and potassium in their daily diet. For this reason, MyPlate encourages a variety of foods, emphasizing a diet high in complex carbohydrates, low in sugar, and low in fats. Using MyPlate provides a diet adequate in vitamins and minerals. It also encourages a consumer to consider the portion of a serving when planning meals and snacks. MyPlate is divided into five food groups, with each group represented by a different color.

5 FOOD GROUPS

1. Grains (orange): Make half of your grains whole
2. Vegetables (green): Vary your veggies

3. Fruits (red): Focus on fruits
4. Dairy (blue): Get your calcium rich, low fat dairy choices
5. Meat and Beans (purple): Go lean with protein

In addition to a healthy diet, MyPlate also emphasizes the importance of physical activity. The incorporation of physical activity in every diet plan is extremely important in order to promote an overall healthy lifestyle.

My Plate's recommendations are based on the sex, age, and level of activity for each individual person. Go to choosemyplate.gov to figure out how many calories you need and how many portions of each food group you should be receiving. This is also found on the first page of the Appendix. Under each food group, there is a reminder that if high fat items or sugar is added to the food choice, it is counted as empty calories from solid fats and added sugar. It has been recommended that empty calories should be limited to 10% of your calories each day. These new guidelines encourage individuals to maintain a desirable body weight. It highlights the importance of managing calories by focusing on portion control. MyPlate promotes weight loss by recommending that we lower our calories by eating less saturated fat and added sugars, as well as consuming less alcohol. Managing weight, getting adequate nutrition, and participating in a regular exercise program are all part of being healthy.