

Prevention Magazine

"Weakness" Meal Plan

Menus

"Make your weakness a weight loss advantage."

Meat & Potato Lovers Menu

The key to losing weight while still eating the comfort foods you grew up with is learning how to prepare them with fewer calories. Start with smart choices: Lean cuts of red meat such as top round, sirloin, and London broil average 240 calories per 3 oz. serving compared with their fattier cousins: prime rib, t-bone, and filet mignon, which weigh in at 340 calories for the same-size portion. Then grill or sauté them in olive oil spray instead of butter to cut the calories even further. For variety, try pork tenderloin or tuna steak as hearty red-meat substitutes. And explore other side dishes such as sweet potatoes and whole grain rice or pasta. They have the same starchy feel as potatoes but boost your fiber intake to fill you up faster.

1,530 calories; 51 g fat

Breakfast:

1 cup bran flakes
½ cup 1% milk
½ cup blueberries

A high-fiber breakfast will help move some of the fat and calories from last night's dinner out of your body.

Lunch:

ham sandwich:

2 slices whole wheat bread
1 oz. reduced-fat Swiss cheese
2 oz. turkey ham
1 roasted red bell pepper
romaine lettuce

½ cup macaroni salad

1 medium banana

For fewer calories, ask if your deli prepares low-fat or fat-free side dishes.

Dinner:

1 cup tomato soup made w/ 1% milk
1 serving sautéed steak (3 oz.) and mushrooms
1 serving scalloped potatoes (3 oz.)
1 cup steamed broccoli

If you stick to the 3 oz. serving size, you can eat meat most days of the week.

Snack:

1 apple
12 potato chips

Having a piece of fruit along with the chips can stop you from eating the whole bag.

Fast Food Fans Menu

Drive-thru food is great because it's quick and it tastes good. But there are ways to get the "fast" without the fat. Many burger places offer grilled chicken sandwiches and salad bars. If fried chicken is your weakness, picking off the breaking strips calories while retaining the flavor. Overall, sub shops are a pretty safe bet- if you go easy on the mayo. And your grocery store is a great place to pick up healthy convenience foods such as reduced-fat hot dogs, low-fat frozen dinners, or stir-fry ensembles for quick meals at home. But when you just can't shake the craving, it's perfectly fine to hit your local hot dog stand or burger joint- just mini-size your meal.

1,739 calories; 56 g fat

Breakfast:

8 oz. fat-free plain yogurt
1/3 cup strawberries
1 slice whole wheat toast w/ 1 Tbsp. fruit spread

Lunch:

1 fast food hamburger
1 small order fast-food french fries
1 12 oz. cola (diet will cut out more calories if you prefer diet soda)
For a more filling meal, load up on low-calorie extras such as tomatoes, lettuce, onion, and pickles.

Dinner:

3 fish sticks
½ cup spaghetti w/ marinara sauce tossed w/ ½ cup cooked spinach and 2 Tbsp. grated parmesan cheese
1 whole wheat roll
Jarred tomato sauces with vegetables are still pretty light on fiber. For more bulk, microwave frozen veggies, and add them to the sauce.

Snack:

1 banana
4 oz. orange juice

Junk Food Junkies Menu

The trick to slimming down w/ junk food is to avoid eating the whole bad. You can get instant portion control by buying single serving sizes of chips, sugary cereals, or candy bars. Also choose "healthier" junk foods: flavored oatmeal instead of sugary cereals, a burrito instead of a hot dog, or toasted pita crisps and hummus instead of chips and dip. Avoid starting your day with a doughnut or pastry, though. These sugary treats can leave you feeling hungry again very quickly. If you must have one, at least pair your goodie with a healthy food such as an apple to help you ward off the munchies later on.

1,560 calories; 52 g fat

Breakfast:

½ grapefruit
1 cup oatmeal
½ cup 1% milk
For a few extra calories, try bananas & cream, french vanilla, or another "junkier" flavored oatmeal.

Junk Food Junkies Menu Continued...

Lunch:

turkey sandwich:

- 2 slices whole grain bread
- 2 oz. turkey breast
- 1 Tbsp. light mayonnaise
- ½ tomato sliced
- romaine lettuce

½ cup corn chips

Baked varieties of chips won't save you any calories if you eat a big bag of them.

Dinner:

2 beef burritos (frozen variety)

½ cup corn kernels mixed with ½ cup sliced red bell pepper

Microwave and eat one burrito at a time. After the first, you may decide not to go back for seconds.

Snack:

1 jelly doughnut

1 cup 1% milk

Smaller doesn't always mean better. One crème-filled doughnut has fewer calories than four doughnut holes.

Dessert-aholics Menu

You can satisfy your sweet tooth with fewer calories if you make the right choices. Most fruits and some vegetables are naturally sweet, so take advantage of these low-calorie treasures. Rich fruits such as mango and bananas are especially thick and creamy, while grapes and strawberries can be frozen for a snack that lasts longer and tastes sweeter. Other foods such as yogurt, jams, some light cheeses, and foods spiced with cinnamon or vanilla extract, can add instant pleasure to a meal. But the decadent sweets you also crave- chocolate, cheesecake, ice cream have their place in weight loss too. If you keep portions reasonable, you can have 100 to 200 calories of desert everyday.

1,644 calories; 45 g fat

Breakfast:

6 oz. orange juice

½ toasted cinnamon raisin english muffin topped with 2 Tbsp. reduced-fat ricotta cheese

An english muffin packs fewer calories than a plain bagel, and it tastes sweeter because it has more sugar.

Lunch:

Peanut butter and jelly sandwich:

- 2 slices whole wheat bread
- 2 tbsp. peanut butter
- ¼ cup jam

½ cup carrot-raisin salad

This yummy classic offers just the right mix of carbohydrates, protein, and fat, so you'll stay full for hours.

Dinner:

1 roasted chicken drumstick

1 baked sweet potato topped with 1/3 cup crushed pineapple packed in juice

1 cup steamed broccoli topped w/

1 oz. shredded Monterey Jack cheese

½ cup chocolate pudding or mousse

Canned fruits are a great way to add flavor and are more nutritious than honey or brown sugar.

Dessert-aholics Menu Continued...

Snack:

1 cup low-fat fruit yogurt
For more satisfaction, toss in some berries

Take out King/Queen Menu

When it comes to having takeout, it's what you do with the meal that makes a difference. If you're eating only pizza, it's easy to gobble down three or four slices. But round out your meal with a quick homemade salad, and you'll eat less. For chinese food, simply transfer it from the paper container to the plate, leaving extra sauce (and calories) behind. And rather than filling your plate with too much of one thing, you're better off getting four 1/2-cup portions of everything you want at a place such as Boston Market, even if that includes a fattening dish such as stuffing. That way, you'll get a more appetizing variety of colors, nutrients, and calories. Weight loss advantage: Once you're out of the restaurant, there's no going back for seconds.

1,728 calories; 45 g fat

Breakfast:

1 toasted 4 oz. bagel spread with 2 Tbsp. cream cheese
1 orange

The honey-raisin bran muffin may seem healthier, but chances are it contains no more fiber and is heavier on calories.

Lunch:

2 cups mixed greens topped w/
½ cup three-bean salad and
½ cup German potato salad
3 flatbread crackers

Beans and greens are a great way to get the fiber you missed at breakfast.

Dinner:

2 slices cheese pizza
2 cups lettuce w/
½ cup beans

For fewer calories, order Sicilian. You're more likely to eat fewer slices of this extra thick pizza.

Snack:

9 oz. low-fat lemon yogurt
1 pear