



How to Keep a Food Record

Your Registered Dietitian may have asked you to keep a food record. Food records are helpful for you and your dietitian to better understand your eating habits, and will help to better tailor your meal plan. But food records are only useful if you provide detailed information. Below are some tips to help you through the process.

1. Don't wait until the end of the day to record your food intake.

Write down the foods and beverages as you are eating or drinking. Do not rely on your memory, as it is easy to forget some details.

2. Include everything that you eat and drink.

Write down *all* foods and beverages that you have had, even if it is only one bite!

3. Use measuring tools.

Whenever possible, measure your foods or beverages using measuring tools such as standard measuring cups, measuring spoons or scales. You might want to get a set of these tools, as an accurate measurement of your intake is very important.

4. Be specific.

The more details you provide, the better the food record will be. Write down the exact amount, way of food preparation, and even the brand name of the food. Try your best to include the following details in your food record:

- Time and the meal of the food/beverages (e.g., breakfast or snack)
- Where food/beverages are prepared (e.g., home, restaurant, etc.)
- Brand name or restaurant name of the food/beverages
- All ingredients of the food/beverages, including oil and condiments
- Amount and measuring unit of food/beverages consumed (e.g., 1 oz)
- Measuring tools that are used (e.g., measuring cup, scale, count, or estimated)
- When the foods/beverages are measured (i.e. before or after cooking)
- How foods/beverages are prepared (e.g., fried, baked, or steamed)

5. Take a picture of your meal/snack.

In cases that you *really* cannot record your intake while you are eating or drinking, you can take a picture using your phone or a digital camera to capture your food intake. As soon as you have the chance, record them in your food record.

6. Attach a recipe and/or food label.

If your food/beverage is made from a recipe that you have, or if you are eating a pre-packaged food, attach the recipe and food labels to the food record.

You might find that keeping a detailed food record will take much effort, but as long as you can keep a detailed food record for **3 days (2 typical weekdays and 1 typical weekend day)** during the week, that will be helpful for your dietitian to understand your eating pattern better.

