

# The 30 Pound Club

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## Small Meals

See if this sounds familiar:

“I can get through the day okay, but the evenings trip me up.”

When there's more time available like there is on the weekends, it's the “I Can Diet Through the Week, but from 5 p.m. Friday Through Sunday Evening I Eat More Than I Did the Entire Week” malady that afflicts a lot of us, including me.

From the emails I've gotten, the issue of what to eat and when to eat are still tripping you up. Finding the way to eat that works for you is challenging. You may be working in a situation where you're not allowed to eat except for specific times. You may work swing shifts where you're always on a different schedule. You might not be able to prepare foods, or maybe you don't want to cook.

Here's an obvious thought: if what you're doing isn't working, it's time to try something different! I'm going to propose that you eat small meals throughout the day every three hours. You can eat fresh food, meal bars, smoothies, pre-mixed shakes, sandwiches, microwaveable meals, soups, salads, or nuts and fruit. It doesn't matter. Of course, I would like you to eat as healthy as possible and make the best choices, but do the best you can.

There are only two rules:

- No meal can exceed 300 calories
- Every meal should have some fat and/or some protein in it—don't obsess about getting a specific combination, but a little fat and protein helps foods stick to your ribs longer.

Bars and shakes are easy—just read the label before you buy them. Here are some whole-food and prepared-food examples:

230 calories: 6-ounce apple with 1 ounce of almonds (about 20)

290 calories: 1 cup blueberries and 1 cup Breyer's Fat Free Vanilla Ice Cream

280 calories: a Subway 6" Turkey Breast Sub with as many veggies as you want

240 calories: Burger King Whopper Junior without mayo

260-270 calories: McDonalds Honey Mustard, Chipotle BBQ, or Ranch Snack Wrap with Grilled Chicken

250 calories: McDonalds Fruit 'n Yogurt Parfait and a large McCafe Nonfat Cappuccino

220 calories: Healthy Choice Turkey Medallions Frozen Dinner

284 calories: Progresso Light Chicken and Dumpling Soup—the whole can—and a cup of grapes or two cups of strawberries

230 calories: Jamba Juice's Jamba Light Berry Fulfilling

I found all the nutritional information on the Internet or by reading the nutrition labels in the grocery store. What a concept! But I'm not going to do this for you; too many diet books try to do that and it doesn't help you think for yourself. You have the rules. Construct your own choices—as complicated or as simple as you want. If you want a bar and a piece of fruit six times a day, it's your choice. Note that the examples include choices at Burger King and McDonalds. Would I recommend you eat there all the time? No—but if that's where the softball team goes after a game, it's important to know you won't be shut out. You can eat almost anywhere that publishes nutrition info—just be prepared.

Now for the rest of the guidelines:

- Don't start eating on a given day until you're ready. For some, like Paula, that might be as soon as you wake up. For those of you like me, it might be a couple of hours later. Whenever you start to eat, the clock starts ticking.
- Drink 8 ounces of a calorie-free liquid before the meal and another 8 ounces after the meal. Water, coffee, iced tea, a calorie-free energy drink—anything with no calories.
- Eat a meal that is less than 300 calories. It can be less as long as it has the protein or fat.
- Eat another meal every 3 hours until about 1 or 2 hours before bed.
- You can't skip a meal! You may have to adjust a few minutes up or down, but you don't skip that meal, so keep something close for emergencies—something easy like a bar that you can stash in your purse, car, desk, or even your pocket.
- If you're up 18 hours, that's 6 small meals. If you're awake less, you need fewer small meals, but it doesn't mean you get to eat more in a meal. After all if you're sleeping, you're not using nearly as many calories, so you need less food.

If you have questions, e-mail me at [30poundclub@drchet.com](mailto:30poundclub@drchet.com). But really try to do this yourself. The information is there. Dig it out and see what works for you. Then let me know how your week went—email me or post it on the wall of the 30 Pound Club Group on Facebook.

What are you prepared to do today?

**Dr. Chet**

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