Introduction to the Exchange Plan Diet

Variations of dietary exchange plans have been around since before World War Two. It was created for diabetics as an easy way to keep track of their daily food intake. Since then many people have lost weight or maintained a healthy weight using exchange programs. Weight Watchers® was based on exchanges until 1997. Richard Simmons Deal-A-Meal® system used exchanges. Joanna Lund’s Healthy Exchanges® and a Christian Program called First Place® are two other programs with which you may be familiar. All of these plans are variations of the Exchange Lists produced by The American Diabetes Association and The American Dietetic Association.

The diet itself is far from extraordinary. It is based on individual food categories including: Bread/Starch, Meat/Protein, Fruits, Vegetables, Milk, Fat, Other Carbohydrate and Free exchanges. Within each category you may substitute or exchange one portion of food for another. The foods in each category are measured into units with similar nutritional information. For instance a 1oz slice of bread can be exchanged or traded for 1/2-cup of cooked spaghetti. Each food, in the measurement indicated, will have approximately the same number of calories, fat, protein and carbohydrates as other foods in the same category. This makes menu planning both flexible and easy. It also acts as a short cut to eating nutritious meals.

When you follow the Exchange Plan Diet, you need a food plan. You can use one included here, or invent your own. Food Plans tell us the number of exchanges we should eat each day to keep within specific calorie ranges. It’s up to us to plug the exchanges into meals and snacks for the day. It’s like putting a puzzle together. Each day is a new puzzle and it’s up to us to fit all of the pieces or exchanges together to make 3 meals a day, plus snacks. Managing our daily food intake becomes much easier when we know our limits and are willing to stay within them. By counting exchanges, we eliminate the need to count calories, plus we are assured a well-balanced diet.
People with between 50 and 100 pounds to lose can generally eat about 1500 calories a day and still lose weight. If you have less than 50 pounds to lose then choose a 1200 calorie plan. 1000 calorie a day plans are appropriate for those with less that 15 pounds to lose, or those who are metabolically resistant to weight loss because of a medical condition. It is challenging to get enough nutrients into one's diet with this few calories. Under these circumstances especially, it's vital that one plan carefully, stay in touch with your health care provider and take a multi-vitamin to ensure all your nutritional bases are covered.

There are a few tools you'll need to begin this diet. First off you need a printer and paper to print out the exchange lists. A small food-scale, measuring cups and spoons will keep your portions honest. A clean, organized kitchen makes it easier and faster to prepare your meals. You'll also need pencil and paper or a notebook to plan and keep track of your daily food intake. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, you need a support system so that isolation and frustration cannot conquer all of your good intentions. All five of these tools are vitally important to the success of any weight loss program. They are explained in more detail below.

The Exchange Lists are based on the same lists used by diabetics and dietitians and physicians. The lists on this site are not all exactly the same as the diabetic exchange lists, but they are similar. The only differences are due to updated nutritional information and the occasional typo. No doctor or dietitian has reviewed or looked over my lists, but I am certain that if any did they would find them quite in order and more than acceptable. Print out the exchange lists and look them over very closely. They are a map to successful weight loss.

Measuring Tools make portion and calorie count possible. If you want an accurate calorie count, then all foods and beverages must be measured. The only accurate way to do this is with a scale, measuring cups and measuring spoons. I used to eyeball or guess a lot of my portions. I always over estimated. For me to see results in the scale I have to be vigilant about measuring my food: all of it, all of the time. In the past I'd measure everything for a while, and then gradually sluff off and go back to guesstimating. This has always slowed down my weight-loss and even halted it on many occasions. In order to really lose weight and not just pretend to, I have to weigh and measure all of my food all of the time.

I use three measuring tools: nested measuring cups, measuring spoons, and an office postage scale. Measuring cups come in standard groups of 1-cup, 1/2-cup, 1/3-cup, 1/4-cup and sometimes 1/8-cup. I also purchased a separate 2-cup measure because it is handy for measuring large amounts of dry milk powder and flour. Measuring Spoons come in standard sizes of 1-tablespoon, 1-teaspoon, 1/2-teaspoon, 1/4-teaspoon and sometimes 1/8-teaspoon too. I find teaspoons to be very helpful when measuring oil and other fats, so I have a few extras. Small cups used for measuring liquid medicine are also handy for measuring small amounts. For milk, water and other liquids, you need a glass measuring cup. Don't be tempted to buy a cheap plastic one. Glass measures last longer, and hold up better to temperature changes. I like to have three of them: sizes 1-cup, 2-cups and 1-quart. If you only have one then a 2-cup size is good.

You will also need a food scale. There are lots of cheap plastic models available that simply don't work. Toss them out or sell them at your next yard sale and never buy another. To get a decent food scale you need $30 and
a good office supply store. At the office supply store go to the postal scale section and have a look around. There will be many digital scales all in a row. Look for one that measures in both ounces and grams. You will have several to choose from, so pick the cheapest, and march home with your purchase. Keep an extra battery on hand in the kitchen junk drawer and you are set. To make cleanup easier I lay waxed paper or plastic wrap over my scale before measuring items like cooked roast beef or shredded cheese. My postal scale is such a joy to use too! It gives me accurate, readable results every time. If a $30 investment helps loose 10 or pounds or more, I consider it well worth the cost. It also helps to get a good visual of what 3 ounces of meat or a 6 ounce potato really looks like. This helped me cut down a lot on overestimating my portions because it forces me to stay honest and on track.

**Gauging Weight Loss** can be done with a regular bathroom scale or by using dressmaker’s measuring tape to record your body’s measurements. Some authorities recommend only weighing in once a week, or even every two weeks. Other authorities suggest weighing daily, but go on to remind us that minor daily fluctuations should be expected. If visual evidence inspires you then create a graph to chart your progress.

If you prefer to use measuring tape then choose which body parts you want to track. Popular places to measure are the upper arm, upper thigh, waist, hips, and bust. You can keep track of a single measurement, or several at a time.

**Cleaning the kitchen** every day gives us the work area necessary to cook and store our food. A dirty kitchen is Hell to work in. I know, I’ve tried and failed, repeatedly. When the refrigerator or cupboards are dirty then the food we store in them can go bad or get lost very quickly. This wastes our food dollar, something most of us have in limited supply. A clean refrigerator on the other hand works like a magic box to preserve our healthy fruits and vegetables throughout the week until we are ready to eat them. Organized cupboards allow us to find our supplies quickly and easily. When we don't have to hunt in dark recesses of cave-like cupboards we save both time and effort.

Dirty dishes are probably the hardest for most of us to keep up with. Some folks can magically make themselves wash as they go, so they never have a sink full of dirty dishes frowning at them from a cluttered kitchen. I am not one of these people. I struggle with the dishes. A lot. What I’ve noticed about myself is that when the dishes are dirty I am unlikely to cook. I’ll find any excuse to get out of it. Instead of preparing good wholesome meals at home, I find myself running by a fast-food joint to pick up happy-meals for the kids. While I’m there it’s a small matter to choose something for myself too. Fast-food chains are doing better at offering healthy choices on their menus but I usually don’t purchase them. The healthy options tend to be expensive and I never seem to have enough cash to buy enough food to fill the bellies of growing chil-
The solution to the fast-food blues is to keep the dishes done. This gives me the environment I need to prepare healthy, low-cost meals for the family, saving me money and improving our health in the process. Making myself do the dishes is like making myself weigh and measure my food. I don’t like doing it. It is inconvenient, time consuming, annoying and often seems pointless. These are lazy lies and self-sabotage. In the short term keeping the dishes done seems like it takes more time, but in the long-run it saves time. Sure, it is annoying to have to hang out in the kitchen at night, finishing up the dishes and putting away the pots and pans when I’d rather be reading in the warmth of a snugly bed. To be honest though, it’s more annoying to be fat or unable to tie my shoes or see my feet when I’m standing. I remind myself of that when I scrape congealed goo off of the plates into the garbage. By morning, I am always thankful for the time I spent on the kitchen the night before. To eat healthy meals, we must have a place to prepare them, so keep the dishes done, and the counters clean. Give yourself clean storage areas for all the healthy foods you have to buy. Sticking to a healthy diet is hard. We have to stack the deck in our favor if we want to succeed.

Keeping Track of your daily food intake is vital. I use an old business planner but any type of notebook will work. If you are serious about wearing a smaller size in the next few months then you have a greater chance of success if you commit to the following requirements:

- Plan meals and exchanges for the day at least the night before. Plan a week at a time if possible.
- Share your plan with another human being or with your support team. Don’t worry, they’re not judging you and you won’t be judging them when they do the same.
- Stick to your plan all day long whether you feel like it or not. Food cannot be about feeling for some of us. It doesn’t matter if we feel like eating what we planned or not. We’re adults. If we want to succeed we must be willing to set such feelings aside, and follow our plan no matter what. Opening the door to feelings at this point can often sabotage our best intentions.
- Write down every morsel you eat, including licking the peanut butter off of your fingers after you make a PB&J sandwich for your youngest. This is hard, but helpful. It allows us to get a long term view of our behavior so we can plan strategies to overcome our challenges.
- Share your results with another human being or with your support team. Remember, they aren’t judging you, just like you aren’t judging them when you return the favor.
- Before going to bed prepare your meal and exchange plan for the next day. To keep the process going, this step must become a nightly routine.

These details may seem like a lot of work at first. As a matter of fact they may almost seem unnecessary. This is absolutely true for
anyone who is able to stick to a diet on their own. If you can make yourself eat less and lose weight so simply then keeping track of everything you eat is indeed unnecessary. Most of can't do it this way. We've tried casual dieting and failed. That's why we are overweight. If we could have done it alone, we would have already. If we could have succeeded just by watching what we eat and consciously trying to eat less then we would be swim-suit skinny by now. The fact is, we have proven again and again that casual dieting leads to failure and frustration. We need the extra help that planning and keeping track of what we eat provides. In addition we usually need the accountability of other human beings to maintain our resolve and our commitment to ourselves.

Many people agree with this plan up until this point. The idea of writing down everything we eat every day though, that is simply ridiculous. I answer with this question, which is more ridiculous, learning to write down everything we eat or living in our fat bodies for the rest of our lives? If I knew that I could be suddenly slim by keeping track of my food intake on a daily basis then I would be much more willing to do it. Well guess what! It won't make us suddenly slim, but it will make us slowly slim. It is another one of the ways we change our behavior and take charge of our situations.

Personally I rebelled against the idea of planning and keeping track of my food intake for a full decade. I wasn't yet ready to take responsibility for every morsel I put into my mouth. I thought to myself that it was obsessive, unduly controlling and plain old stupid. I believed that I was strong enough to succeed without having to resort to such drastic measures. Now I can look back and see that I was in denial. I wasn't ready to accept the reality of my situation. The truth is that if I don't plan my meals then I will make poor food choices. I will eat foods that keep me fat and enslave me to my appetite. I refuse to be a victim of my appetite. I am bigger and stronger than it is and I will use every tool in my arsenal to put myself where I deserve and am obliged to be, as the creator and designer of my body's destiny.

A Support System is the last requirement. This will take a different shape for different dieters. Formal groups are available like TOPS, Weight Watchers, First Place and Overeater's Anonymous. These are all good support systems. Some are free and some are not. Some of them will make you follow their diet plans and others will let you choose your own plan. Choose the plan that is best for your lifestyle and pocketbook.

On-line support communities are another option. It is best if you have both real-life and cyber support systems. They can work together synergistically to give you the benefits of both approaches. I have tried dieting with only on-line support. This wasn't enough for me and it isn't enough for most of the people who have written me. Experience taught us that real-life, face to face support, whether a formal meeting or an informal pact between friends can make the difference between success or failure. Climb off the yo-yo and call a friend.
A Final Note on the Exchange Plan

Food exchange programs are well tested. The reason we don't hear more about them today is because Food Exchanges are tried and true—not "New & Improved!". It's hard to market a system for weight-loss as a "New Scientific Breakthrough!" when it has been working successfully for over 60 years. Without flashy print and media ads, exchange plan dieting has fallen by the wayside.

This makes things easier for us. Diets run in trends and fads just like fashion does. Low-fat diets were the trend of the 90's and controlled-carb diets were the early 2000's. Right now a big favorite is television program related weight loss, including diet shakes by celebrity fitness gurus and cookbooks by celebrity chefs. Whichever diet plan isn't the current the rage is more accessible to those of us low on cash. Books at used book stores that support low calorie and exchange diets are not selling real well right now, which means they are more affordable. Library books about low calorie or exchange plans are not in high demand so they are more accessible too. We aren't bombarded with television commercials every 10 minutes telling us that we have to "Buy this now!" in order for our plan to work. This makes the temptation to spend foolishly less acute and easier to resist. We have everything we need in our own kitchens already. We don't need to spend $50 to $100 or more on a book or CD or website membership to convince ourselves or others that "this time it's finally serious". Weight-loss is about behavior. It's about the many small choices we make every day. We can't buy the fat off of our bodies. If we could, then we would have; millions of us would have. Weight-loss is one of those fleeting things in modern culture that we cannot buy to prove our external value. It's something we must create individually, by changing from the inside out. If we truly want it then we must earn it for ourselves.

Exchange plan based weight-loss programs have some definite advantages over other diets. First off, it's affordable. It can be as cheap or as expensive as we are willing to make it. Secondly, almost all doctors approve of it. The next time you see your doctor, tell her that your diet is based on the diabetic exchanges. She will give you an approving pat as she says "Good Going!" and sends you on your way. Thirdly, exchange plans are fully customizable. We can make each meal fit our own private lifestyles with all the details addressed to our own satisfaction.

Maybe we can't afford to pay well educated dietitians to custom design our food plans for us but we can afford to address this challenge individually. By doing research ourselves its possible to customize our own food plans and adapt them directly to our lifestyles and comfort zones. We can make Vegetarian plans, Vegan, High Protein or Low Fat food plans, according to the criteria that are most important to us and our individual lifestyles. Another bonus is that we are learning how to cook and eat healthy foods on a daily basis. When the weight loss phase is over we can flow smoothly into the maintenance phase. The change over occurs naturally, as
an outgrowth of the healthy habits we have already established.

Finally, I should note that cost is a significant factor to me personally. I have to watch every penny. For me that means cooking from scratch and focusing on low-cost foods. This gives me direct control over the cost of the calories and nutrients that go into my family's diet. I don't know how to lose weight while eating fast foods or convenience foods. These foods are part of the problem that has resulted in 60% of the American population being overweight. Slow food is much healthier for us and will increase our health, not our waistlines.

Before beginning your weight-loss program you should consult your doctor or health care professional. I neglected to do this when I began and had to change several details to match the recommendations of my nurse practitioner. This was inconvenient to say the least! It would have been better if I had spoken with her about my program before I began.
Exchanges In A Nutshell

An exchange is the same thing as a portion. Within a food group one portion of an item may be traded or exchanged for one portion of another item. For instance, 1-slice of bread may be exchanged for 1 small dinner roll. They each have similar calories and nutrients. Using the exchange Plan guides us in planning meals with greater variety. It also reminds us to include all of the healthy basics we need to eat each day.

The Bread or Starch Group: Generally 1 serving is equal to:
- 1-ounce of bread or crackers
- 1/2 cup cooked cereal or pasta
- 3/4 cup cold cereal

Some bread products are prepared with added fat. Muffins, biscuits and waffles are prime examples. Since these items have a higher fat content than most Bread Exchanges, the fat is made up for with a fat exchange. This means that a muffin is worth 1 Bread Exchange plus 1 Fat Exchange. The extra fat exchange accommodates the extra amount of fat in these foods.

Starchy vegetables are included in the Bread Group because their carbohydrates are very similar to bread items. Mixed vegetables, corn, peas, baked beans and potatoes are all members of the bread group.

The Vegetable Group: Generally 1 serving is equal to:
- 1 cup raw leafy green vegetables like lettuce or spinach
- 1/2 cup of most other vegetables, raw or cooked
- 1/2 cup vegetable juice

Be sure to eat at least 4 servings of vegetables while trying to lose weight, more is better. Vegetables fill us up without filling us out. Check out the Free Exchanges to see which vegetables may be eaten in unlimited amounts.

The Fruit Group Generally 1 serving is equal to:
- 1 medium fruit like an apple or orange
- 2 very small fruit like plums or tangerines
- 1/2 cup canned unsweetened fruit
• 1/2 cup fruit juice
• 1/2 a banana
• 1 cup berries or melon

Look over the Fruit exchanges to note any exceptions to this rule of thumb. Some juices are limited to 1/3 cup instead of 1/2 cup. Dried fruits vary.

The Protein Group: Generally 1 serving is equal to:
• 1 ounce cooked meat, poultry or fish
• 1/4 cup canned tuna or salmon
• 1/4 cup cooked dried beans, peas or lentils
• 1 ounce light cheese (+ 1/2 fat exchange)
• 1 tablespoon nut butter (+ 1 fat exchange)

Some protein exchanges are higher in fat than others. These high fat items “cost” 1/2 to 1 Fat exchange in addition to a Protein exchange.

The Milk Group: Generally 1 serving is equal to:
• 1 cup skim milk or 1% fat milk
• 1/3 cup instant nonfat dry milk
• 3/4 cup nonfat yogurt, plain or artificially sweetened

If you are lactose intolerant you may substitute soymilk for dairy milk. Be sure to read the label. A serving should have less than 100 calories and 12g of carbohydrates.

The Fat Group: Generally 1 serving is equal to:
• 1 teaspoon oil or butter or margarine or lard or mayonnaise or animal fat
• 1 tablespoon reduced fat margarine or mayonnaise
• 1 tablespoon salad dressing

Use fats sparingly. They are concentrated sources of calories. Reduced fat products can help extend your fat servings to cover more territory.

Free Exchanges: These add variety to our diet. Because they are so low in calories and carbohydrates they do not need to be added to our daily totals. Measured Free exchanges should be limited to 3 or 4 a day. Unmeasured Free exchanges may be consumed as desired.

Other Carbohydrates: This group is made up mostly of sugary or starchy items. They add needed variety to our menus. Each serving from this group must be used to replace a serving from the Bread/Starch Group. Because of this it’s recommended that servings from this group be limited to 1 or 2 per day. If you are on a limited carbohydrate diet, these are the exchanges that you should omit from your diet first.
Dietary Exchange Lists

Bread/Starch Group
Each food in this group supplies approximately 15g carbohydrate, 3g protein and 80 calories. Some starchy vegetables are in this group instead of the vegetable group. I was very rebellious about this idea to begin with, but I have come to accept it as a necessary part of following the exchange plan. When possible choose whole grain versions of the foods in this group.

The following items are equal to 1 Bread/Starch exchange.

Breads
- 1-ounce slice bread, any type
- 1-ounce roll, any type
- 3 tablespoons bread crumbs
- 1/2 an English Muffin
- 1-ounce pita bread, 6-inches
- 2 slices store-bought reduced calorie bread
- 1 store-bought reduced calorie hot dog or hamburger bun
- 1 medium flour tortilla
- 2 small corn tortillas
- 1 reduced fat frozen waffle

Cereals
- 3/4 cup of most unsweetened cold cereals
- 1/2 cup of most cooked hot cereals
- 1-1/2 cups puffed rice or puffed wheat
- 3/4 cup cornflakes
- 1/4 cup Grape-Nuts
- 1/2 cup cooked oatmeal
1/4 cup dry oatmeal
1/2 cup cooked grits
3 tablespoons dry grits
2 tablespoons Cream of Wheat or Farina
3 tablespoons dry cornmeal
1/2 cup cooked cornmeal
1 large shredded wheat biscuit
1/2-cup bite-sized shredded wheat
1/2 cup bran cereal
6 tablespoons raw wheat bran
3 tablespoons wheat germ
1/4 cup oat bran

Grains & Pasta
3 tablespoons wheat flour, any type: all-purpose, unbleached, whole wheat, barley, spelt, self-rising, rye, or bread flour
3 tablespoons rice flour
1/3 cup cooked white or brown rice
2 tablespoons uncooked rice
1/2 cup cooked wild rice
1/2 cup cooked whole wheat or bulgur
1/3 cup cooked barley
1-1/2 tablespoons dry barley
1/4 cup cooked millet
1-1/2 tablespoons dry millet
6 tablespoons cooked couscous
1/2 cup cooked macaroni
1/4 cup dry macaroni
1/2 cup cooked egg noodles
1/3 cup dry egg noodles
1/2 cup cooked spaghetti
1/4 cup dry spaghetti
1 ounce (dry) lasagna noodle, 1 average noodle

Starchy Vegetables
1/2 cup mashed potatoes
4 ounces raw potato
1/2 cup sweet potato (no added sugar)
1/2 cup cooked corn
1/2 a fresh, large corn on the cob, or a small frozen one, about 6-inches long
1/2 cup creamed corn
1/2 cup peas
1/2 cup lima beans
1 cup mixed vegetables with corn or peas
1/3 cup baked beans, canned or homemade
1 cup winter squash (acorn squash, pumpkin, butternut etc.)

Snacks
8 animal crackers
3 cups plain, air-popped popcorn
3 square graham crackers
3 gingersnaps
6 saltines or soda-crackers
3/4 ounce baked tortilla or potato chips
3/4 ounce pretzels
3/4 ounce hard, crisp bread sticks
24 oyster crackers
2 thin crisp breads (Wasa or RyCrisp)
2 rice cakes, any flavor
1 cup low-fat croûtons
5 reduced fat Triscuits
3/4 ounce matzo

The following items equal 1-Bread/Starch Exchange and 1-Fat Exchange.
2-1/2 inch biscuit
1/2 cup chow mein noodles
2-ounces prepared cornbread
6 round butter type crackers
1 cup regular croûtons
3 ounces French Fries
1/4 cup granola
1 granola bar
1 average muffin
2 pancakes, 4-inches each
3 cups microwave popcorn
1/3 cup prepared stuffing
5 vanilla wafers
1 regular waffle
2 crisp taco shells
1 ounce thin wheat crackers
1/3 cup hummus
1/2 cup light ice cream

The following items equal 1-1/2 Bread/Starch Exchanges.
1-1/2 ounce hamburger or hot dog buns. Most store-brands are about this weight
➔ Small English Muffins, 22g Carbohydrates, and 120 calories or less
➔ Small Bagel, 22 Carbohydrates & 120 calories or less

The following item equals 1/2-Bread/Starch Exchange and 1 Fat Exchange.
➔ 2 tablespoons Flax Seed, or 3 tablespoons ground Flax Seed

Vegetable Group
Items from the vegetable group contain approximately 25 calories, 2g protein and 5g of carbohydrates. Be sure to eat at least 4 servings of vegetables everyday. The measurements apply to cooked, raw, canned or frozen vegetables, unless otherwise stated.

The following items are equal to 1 Vegetable exchange.
➔ 1/2 cup cooked artichokes
➔ 1/2 cup asparagus
➔ 1/2 cup bamboo shoots
➔ 1/2 cup green beans
➔ 1 cup fresh bean sprouts
➔ 1/2 cup beets
➔ 1/2 cup broccoli
➔ 1/2 cup Brussels sprouts
➔ 1 cup raw shredded cabbage
➔ 1/2 cup cooked cabbage
➔ 1/2 cup carrots
➔ 1/2 cup cauliflower
➔ 1 cup celery
➔ 1 cup sliced cucumbers
➔ 1/2 cup cooked eggplant
➔ 1/2 cup chopped green onions or scallions
➔ 1/2 cup cooked greens, collards, kale, turnip, beet greens, etc.
➔ 1 cup raw greens
➔ 1/2 cup cooked mushrooms
➔ 1 cup raw mushrooms
➔ 1/2 cup okra
➔ 1/2 cup chopped onions
➔ 1/2 cup pea pods
➔ 1/2 cup peppers: green, yellow or red
➔ 1 cup radishes
➔ 1 cup raw salad greens or lettuce
➔ 1/2 cup rutabagas
➔ 1/2 cup sauerkraut
➔ 1/2 cup cooked spinach
➔ 1 cup raw spinach
➔ 1/4-cup sugar-free spaghetti sauce (Hunt’s)
➔ 1/2 cup summer squash
➔ 1/2 cup tomatoes
➔ 1/4 cup tomato sauce
➔ 1/2 cup tomato juice
➔ 1/2 cup turnips
➔ 1/2 cup mixed vegetable juice
➔ 1/2 cup water chestnuts
➔ 1/2 cup zucchini

Fruit Group
Each food in the Fruit Group supplies your diet with 15g carbohydrate and 60 calories.

The following items are equal to 1 Fruit exchange.
➔ 1 small apple
➔ 1/2 cup apple juice
➔ 1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce
➔ 4 fresh apricots
Protein Group

Each food within this group contains between 50 and 60 calories and up to 3g fat. These are referred to as lean meats. Meats with a higher fat content will “cost” a protein exchange plus 1/2 to 1 fat exchange.

The following items are equal to 1 Protein Exchange.

Vegetarian

- 2 tablespoons Parmesan Cheese
- 2 ounces fat-free cream cheese
- 3 egg whites
- 1/2 cup egg substitute
- 1/2-ounce dry Textured Vegetable Protein
- 3/4 ounce dried beans, split peas or lentils, any kind
- 1/4 cup cooked or canned dry beans, any kind
- 1/4 cup cooked lentils or split peas
- 1 ounce vegetarian burger or fake meat, any kind

Fish & Seafood

- 2 ounce cooked white fish such as flounder, whiting, sole, cod, tilapia, halibut, ocean perch, pollack etc.
- 1-1/2 ounces of cooked oily fish such as salmon or tuna
- 1-1/2 ounces canned fish, packed in water
- 1-1/2 ounces cooked or canned clams, packed in water
- 2 ounce cooked shrimp, crab, oysters etc.

Poultry

- 1 ounce cooked chicken or turkey, white or dark meat
- 1 ounce cooked ground turkey
➔ 1 ounce cooked turkey breakfast sausage
➔ 1 ounce smoked turkey sausage

**Beef, Pork & Other Meats**
➔ 1 ounce cooked, drained and rinsed ground beef, regular or lean
➔ 1 ounce cooked lean beef, all visible fat removed
➔ 1 ounce cooked extra-lean ground beef, 10% fat or less
➔ 1 ounce cooked or canned ham
➔ 1 ounce cooked lean pork, all visible fat removed
➔ 1 ounce cooked lean lamb, all visible fat removed
➔ 1 ounce cooked liver, heart or kidneys

**Processed Meats**
➔ 1-1/2 ounces low-fat deli meat: ham, beef, chicken, turkey, etc.
➔ 1-1/2 ounces fat-free hot dogs
➔ 1 ounce reduced-fat canned luncheon meat such as SPAM® or Treet®
➔ 1 ounce extra-lean turkey bacon
➔ 1 ounce Canadian Bacon
➔ 1 ounce reduced-fat smoked sausage

**The following items are equal to 1 Protein exchange plus 1/2 Fat Exchange:**
➔ 1 ounce lean corned beef, all fat removed
➔ 1 ounce canned corned beef
➔ 1 ounce lean ground beef, 15% fat, ground round
➔ 1 ounce hot dog, 3g fat per ounce
➔ 1 ounce chicken or turkey bologna, 1 slice
➔ 1 ounce regular turkey bacon

**Vegetarian**
➔ 4 ounces tofu; 1/2 cup
➔ 1/4 cup tempeh
➔ 1 whole egg
➔ 1/4 cup part skim ricotta cheese
➔ 1 ounce part skim mozzarella cheese, 1/4 cup shredded
➔ 1 ounce reduced fat or 2% hard cheese, 1/4 cup shredded
➔ 1 ounce feta cheese

**The following items are equal to 1 Protein exchange and 1 Fat exchange.**
➔ 1 ounce hard cheese, or 1/4 cup shredded: Cheddar, Swiss, American, Provolone etc.
➔ 1 tablespoon peanut butter
➔ 1 tablespoon Tahini
➔ 1 tablespoon any nut butter: Almond, Cashew, Soy Nut, no sugar added
➔ 1 ounce cooked, drained and rinsed pork sausage
➔ 1 ounce Neufchatel Cheese
➔ 3 tablespoons miso

**Milk Group**
The foods in this group supply 90 calories, 12g carbohydrate, 8g protein and less than 3g fat per listed serving.

**The following items are equal to 1 Milk exchange.**
➔ 1/3 cup instant nonfat dry milk powder
➔ 1 cup reconstituted skim milk
➔ 1/4 cup buttermilk powder
➔ 1/2 cup evaporated skim milk
➔ 1 cup fresh skim milk
➔ 1 cup fresh 1% fat milk
➔ 3/4 cup plain non-fat yogurt, homemade or store-bought
➔ 1 cup nonfat buttermilk
➔ 1/2 cup nonfat cottage cheese (this can also be 2 Protein Exchanges if you prefer)

**Other Milk Products**
➔ 3/4 to 1 cup artificially sweetened fruit-flavored yogurt
➔ 1 sugar-free dairy shake like Alba (not slim-fast)
➔ 2 packets sugar-free hot chocolate mix, 1 packet is 1/2 a Milk Exchange

The following items are equal to 1 Milk exchange and 2 Fat exchanges.
➔ 1 cup fresh whole milk
➔ 1 cup reconstituted whole milk
➔ 1/3 cup instant powdered whole milk
➔ 1 cup whole buttermilk
➔ 1 cup whole milk yogurt
➔ 1/2 cup evaporated whole milk

Fat Group
Fat exchanges contain 5g fat and 45 calories each. By choosing reduced fat versions of common items like butter and mayonnaise, you can stretch out your fats to cover more territory.

The following items are equal to 1 Fat exchange.
➔ 1/8 of an avocado, 1-ounce
➔ 1 teaspoon bacon grease
➔ 1 slice bacon
➔ 1 teaspoon butter
➔ 2 teaspoons whipped butter
➔ 1 tablespoon light butter
➔ 2 tablespoons shredded coconut
➔ 1 tablespoon cream cheese
➔ 1 tablespoon heavy cream
➔ 2 tablespoons half & half

➔ 1 teaspoon lard
➔ 1 teaspoon margarine
➔ 1 tablespoon reduced fat margarine
➔ 1-1/2 teaspoons 65% oil spread
➔ 1 teaspoon mayonnaise
➔ 1 tablespoon reduced fat mayonnaise
➔ 1 teaspoon oil, any type
➔ 2 teaspoons peanut butter
➔ 2 teaspoons tahini
➔ 1 tablespoon commercial salad dressing
➔ 2 tablespoons reduced fat salad dressing
➔ 1 teaspoon shortening
➔ 2 tablespoons sour cream
➔ 8 to 10 large green or black olives

Free Exchanges
Free foods have less than 20 calories and less than 5g carbohydrates each. You don’t have to add them towards your exchanges. If a food has a specified serving size, limit yourself to 3 or 4 of these total, spread throughout the day. This doesn’t mean you can eat 3 servings of sugar-free jelly and 3 tablespoons of fat-free mayonnaise, and 3/4 cup of salsa. It does mean that you can have one serving of each of these items throughout the day. Combined, they would add up to 3 servings total. Foods without a serving size listed, may be consumed as often as you like.

The following items are equal to 1 Free exchange:
➔ Artificial Sweeteners
➔ 1/2 cup unsweetened rhubarb
➔ 1/2 cup unsweetened cranberries
➔ 1 tablespoon fat-free cream cheese
The following vegetables may be eaten in any quantity desired:

- alfalfa sprouts
- cabbage
- celery
- cucumbers
- green onions
- lettuce
- mushrooms
- parsley
- radishes
- spinach
- zucchini

Other Carbohydrates

The main purpose of this exchange group is to give your diet greater flexibility. Other carbohydrates are usually made up of sugar. Each exchange in this group must be used to replace a Bread/Starch exchange. Foods in this group are not as nutritious as the Bread/Starch exchanges they replace. For this reason I recommend you limit yourself to one per day. Remember, you must omit one of your Bread/Starch exchanges, whenever you use the Other Carbohydrate exchange.

The following items are equal to 1 Other Carbohydrate exchange:

- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon molasses
- 1 tablespoon genuine maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon pancake syrup
2 tablespoons reduced calorie pancake syrup
➔ 1 tablespoon brown sugar
➔ 2 tablespoons powdered sugar
➔ 1 tablespoon Sucanat or Rapadura
➔ 1 tablespoon granular Fructose
➔ 1/2 cup sherbet or sorbet
➔ 1/2 cup fat-free, sugar-free ice cream
➔ 1/2 cup spaghetti sauce from a jar
➔ 1 cup sugar free canned spaghetti sauce, (Hunt’s brand, 40 calories or less per 1/2-cup.)
➔ 1/2 cup condensed tomato soup, 1-cup prepared with water
➔ 1/2 cup condensed reduced fat cream of something soup, 1-cup prepared with water
➔ 1/2 cup condensed alphabet, vegetable soup, 1-cup prepared with water
➔ 1/2 cup condensed chicken noodle soup or chicken rice soup, 1-cup prepared with water

The following item is equal to 1/2 a Milk exchange and 1/2 an Other Carbohydrate exchange.
➔ 1/2 cup sugar-free pudding prepared with skim milk, any flavor

The following item is equal to 1/2 a Milk exchange and 1 Other Carbohydrate exchange.
➔ 1/2 cup regular pudding prepared with skim milk, any flavor

The following item is equal to 1/2 a Fat exchange and 1 Other Carbohydrate exchange.
➔ 1/2 cup ice milk or frozen dairy dessert, any flavor

BONUS! Very Lean Protein Exchange

Very Lean Protein Exchanges contain 7 grams of protein, up to 1 gram of fat and about 35 calories per serving. This is fully 20 calories less per serving than items from the regular Protein Exchange. Nutritional data in recipes usually doesn’t specify if the protein exchanges are very lean or standard. Knowing which ones are very lean, allows you to choose recipes that make the most of foods from this group.

Take special note of packaged meat at your supermarket. Some brands are specially raised to produce high quality, extra lean meat. Look at the nutritional label on these packages. If a 4-ounce raw portion has 140 calories or less then it qualifies for this group.

The following foods are equal to 1 Very Lean Protein Exchange.

Extra Lean Beef, trimmed of every bit of fat
➔ 1 ounce raw or 3/4-ounce cooked Ground Beef with 4% fat or less
➔ 1 ounce raw or 3/4-ounce cooked extremely lean beef like Top Round, Eye of Round, Sirloin Tip, or Flank Steak
➔ 1 ounce deli-style Roast Beef, Corned Beef or Beef Pastrami, 4% fat or less
➔ 1 ounce fat-free hot dogs

Very Lean Pork & Lamb, trimmed of every bit of fat
➔ 1 ounce raw, or 3/4 ounce cooked extra lean lamb chops or leg of lamb
➔ 1 ounce raw, or 3/4 ounce cooked extra lean pork loin or tender loin
➔ 1 ounce deli-style ham, 4% fat or less

**Chicken & Turkey White Meat**
➔ 1 ounce cooked Chicken or Turkey Breast, no skin or fat
➔ 1 ounce Ground Chicken or Turkey Breast, 5% fat or less
➔ 1 ounce deli-style Chicken or Turkey breast, seasoned or plain

**Fish & Seafood**
➔ 1 ounce cooked white fish like: cod, flounder, halibut, mackerel, ocean perch, pollack, sole, tilapia, tuna, trout, or whiting
➔ 1 ounce canned tuna, packed in water, well drained
➔ 1 ounce imitation shell fish
➔ 1 ounce cooked crab

➔ 1 ounce cooked shrimp
➔ 1 ounce cooked clams
➔ 1 ounce cooked lobster
➔ 1 ounce cooked scallops

**Cheese & Eggs**
➔ 1 ounce fat-free cheese, any type
➔ 1/4 cup nonfat cottage cheese
➔ 3 tablespoons fat-free cream cheese
➔ 1/4 cup egg substitute
➔ 2 egg whites

---

While this group is similar to the ADA’s very lean protein group, it is not identical. I use these very lean exchanges as a tool to assist me in planning my menus which must be very low calorie due to a metabolic disorder. This group of exchanges is useful in such situations but is not meant as a substitute for the standard protein group appearing earlier in this document. Always contact your health care provider before beginning this or any diet.
Various Food Plans
for use with the Exchange Plan Diet

High Carbohydrate Food Plans
For vegetarians, or those who prefer a diet based on whole grains and dried beans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calories</th>
<th>1200</th>
<th>1400</th>
<th>1500</th>
<th>1800</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bread</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free</td>
<td>2 or 3</td>
<td>2 or 3</td>
<td>3 or 4</td>
<td>3 or 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Basic Balanced Diet Food Plans
For omnivores and those who prefer a simple, budget-friendly, balanced diet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calories</th>
<th>1200</th>
<th>1400</th>
<th>1500</th>
<th>1800</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bread</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free</td>
<td>1 or 2</td>
<td>3 or 4</td>
<td>3 or 4</td>
<td>3 or 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
High Protein Food Plans
For those who are carb sensitive and lose best with a high protein diet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calories</th>
<th>1200</th>
<th>1400</th>
<th>1500</th>
<th>1800</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bread</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free</td>
<td>2 or 3</td>
<td>2 or 3</td>
<td>3 or 4</td>
<td>3 or 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bonus Plans
for Petite Frames & Those who are Metabolically Challenged.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calories</th>
<th>1000</th>
<th>1300</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bread</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable</td>
<td>4 or more</td>
<td>4 or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free</td>
<td>2 or 3</td>
<td>3 or 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Following information may be helpful in creating your own customized food plan.

➔ Bread Group: 80 calories, 15g carbohydrate and 3g protein
➔ Vegetable Group: 25 calories, 5g carbohydrate and 2g protein
➔ Fruit Group: 60 calories and 15g carbohydrate.
➔ Protein: 55 calories, 7g protein and 3g fat.
➔ Milk: 90 calories, 12g carbohydrate, 8g protein and less than 3g fat.
➔ Fat: 45 calories and 5g fat
➔ Free: Less than 20 calories and less than 5g carbohydrate
➔ Other Carbohydrate: 80 calories, 15g carbohydrate and 3g protein. This category is used to replace a bread exchange.