



Cardiovascular Nutrition & Weight Loss Guide

Hello and thank you for choosing Apex Nutrition, LLC to create a meal plan and nutrition education packet for you. This guide will direct you through the other pamphlets. I will try to explain the tools I have provided, how they relate to your cardiovascular health and weight loss goals, and why they are important. This packet can be overwhelming, so take a deep breath and realize that you do not have to master all of this in one day. Start by following the meal plan. By doing this, you will automatically make improvements to your nutrition. Then, read through the other pamphlets (maybe just one per week) to learn why I have suggested the foods on the meal plan and how to have a healthy relationship with food for life. Here goes...

First, look at "Men's Cardiovascular Health & Weight Loss Checklist." Use this checklist to make sure you cover all the aspects of Cardiovascular nutrition while meeting your weight loss goals. This is very important because it is not only about weight loss, but healthy, disease preventing nutrition. Anyone can lose weight by simply cutting their calories. It is a different challenge to make sure you obtain the nutrients your body needs to be healthy while controlling calories and losing weight.

Next, take a thorough look at your Mix and Match Meal Plan. If you pick one option for each meal and snack, you will eat/drink an appropriate amount of calories in 5-6 small meals per day for weight loss for your height and sex. Notice the calorie adjustments for age and cardiovascular activity. Feel free to make these adjustments initially or try the meal plan as is for 2 weeks and then adjust it as needed.

Eating small meals and snacks throughout the day can improve your metabolism. A word of caution: when I suggest a snack, I am suggesting a healthy, intentional, and portioned snack between two meals. I suggest these snacks because they:

- * help improve metabolism by providing your body with a consistent energy flow
- * decrease the risk of being overly hungry at the next meal and overeating
- * increase the chances of getting all the nutrients you need in a day
- * decrease the amount of calories you eat at one meal and thereby decrease the amount of calories your body will likely store as fat.

This is different than snacking or grazing throughout the day mindlessly without regard to portion. It is also important that you drink 64 oz. of water each day - more when you exercise, especially in hot/humid conditions. Many experts believe that hydration is another key to improving metabolism.

The calorie level and pattern of eating on the meal plan, in addition to ~30-60 minutes of cardiovascular exercise 5 or more days/week, should allow you to begin to lose weight. If you are not losing weight after 2 weeks of consistently following the plan, however, make

the adjustments suggested on the bottom of the 1st page of the plan. The meal plan incorporates the nutrition education taught with this packet. If you would like, you can switch the meals around (such as eat your larger dinner meal at noon and a lighter lunch-type meal in the evening). You can also substitute your own meal/snack ideas as long as they have similar calories as the meal or snack on the meal plan and are nutritious (high in fiber, low in unhealthy fats - as you'll learn with this packet). The Recipe Collection contains a variety of delicious and easy dinner and vegetable recipes that compliment the meal plan. Begin following the meal plan as soon as possible.

Next, glance at the handout entitled "Carbohydrates and Fiber." During week 2 of following this program, read through this sheet and discover the importance of a high fiber diet. As explained in this handout, fiber is the foundation of preventative nutrition. In my experience, it has been one key to successful weight loss on any calorie level. I believe it helps for a variety of reasons such as: 1) it makes you feel full so you eat less, 2) it improves metabolism, and 3) it promotes healthy digestion and elimination of wastes. In Western societies, much of our food (including grains) is processed and void of the vitamins, minerals, and fiber naturally found in the food. Therefore, we have to be intentional about choosing foods that are 100% whole grain and whole food (fresh fruits and vegetables). The starch that is found in processed grains works in your body just like sugar. Although most people wouldn't feel good about eating any meal high in sugar, many essentially do just that by eating refined grains. It is imperative to replace foods with these processed starches with their food counterparts that are whole grain and whole food. Almost all grain products (cereals, breads, tortillas, crackers, etc) can be found in 100% whole grain form. Other sources of fiber include fruits and vegetables, nuts and seeds, and beans. Try to get 25+ grams of fiber per day!

Next, glance at "Reasons for Your Food Choices." Take time during week 3 of following this program to work through the exercises in this sheet. Food choices and weight loss are about so much more than just hunger and food for most people. No matter how effective a weight loss plan, if you continually go back to poor food habits and triggers, you may never overcome an unhealthy relationship with food. As you work through this handout and the meal plan, you should begin to view food as fuel for your body. This is a very important step in developing a healthy eating lifestyle.

Next, glance at the handout entitled "Healthy & Unhealthy Fats." During week 4 of following this program, read through this sheet and discover which fats can improve your health and which ones hinder it. The first step in cardiovascular nutrition is minimizing fats that are detrimental to cholesterol levels and using fats that are beneficial. As you will read, saturated fats and trans fats need to be minimized. Monounsaturated fats and omega 3 fats should be used in their place. And, for most people, it is a good idea to begin or continue supplementing omega-3 fats daily in addition to trying to eat fish twice per week.

The last key to cardiovascular nutrition is to make sure you are doing all you can to optimize your blood pressure. For many people who are overweight, weight loss can make a significant difference in your blood pressure (the calorie level in the meal plan will help you lose weight). Beyond weight loss, you can also minimize your salt intake and increase your potassium and calcium intake by focusing on whole foods (instead of processed foods) and following the guidelines in "Sodium, Potassium, Calcium and your Blood Pressure." Glance at this handout. During week 5 of following this program, read through it carefully. These suggestions go hand-in-hand with the suggestions in the other handouts and the meal plan. The overriding recommendation is: use whole food and whole grain ingredients foods of processed foods.

Finally, I have included a food and exercise diary. You can use this as your own way of tracking your progress and to identify eating and exercise triggers and habits. Keeping a food diary is one of the best ways to keep yourself accountable on a daily basis and ensure your success! I also recommend beginning food journaling as soon as possible.

Just to make sure you are consistent in tracking your weight changes, here are some tips for obtaining weight and body fat percentages:

- * weigh at the same time of day, weigh after the same activities (ie. Don't weigh one time after taking a shower and the next time before taking a shower - it is probably best to simply weight in the morning right after you get out of bed).
- * if you weigh daily, expect some fluctuations based on hydration and water retention. It is okay to weigh daily, but only judge progress based on a weekly weight (ie. every Monday).
- * if you get your body fat percentage based on caliper measurements, make sure the measurer is a trained professional and has evaluated numerous clients using calipers. Have the same person perform the measurements each time. Also, the more measurement sites, the more accurate.
- * if you use a scale with a body fat percentage feature, make sure you take your measurement at the same time of day each time and after the same activities (just like weight). These machines calculate a value based on the speed that an electrical signal is run through your body - muscle is mostly made up of water, so it conducts the signal while fat does not contain water and does not conduct the signal. If you are more hydrated for one measurement than another, you will get inaccurate results.

Thanks again for your purchase. I believe this is a great start and you will be on your way to accomplishing your lifestyle and weight goals in no time! In 3-4 weeks, you should be consistently following the meal plan and you should understand the basics of portions, fiber, fats, and eating for fuel. I recommend that you make a commitment to follow the plan for at least 3 months to track your progress. If you decide that you would benefit

from weekly emails from Apex Nutrition for encouragement, accountability, and answers to any questions, please request this service by sending an email to services@apexnutritionllc.com. It costs \$30/month and includes 1 weekly initial email and 1 response email/week. I know you can do it! I hope you believe this, too!

Take care and have a great day!

Kelli Jennings, RD, President
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PS. I would also like to recommend 1 book to you: Thin for Life by Ann Fletcher, RD (ISBN: 0-618-34055-6). It is a great compilation of weight loss and maintenance success stories. It has helped many of my clients with the psychological aspects of losing weight such as emotional eating and identifying food triggers. I highly recommend it!