

# Cheat Meals

Cheat meals... What are they and should we have them?

You have started your new healthy eating plan well, eating the right things, discipline is still good. But if you completely neglect the foods you love, you are setting yourself up for disaster. We don't want to say no to guilty pleasures, we want to learn to say yes in a way that won't damage our healthy eating habits, and to help make this balanced eating approach a long term goal.

Cheat foods are any food that would not usually be in your healthy eating plan such as chocolate, McDonalds, Ice Cream and even alcohol, and the list goes on. Cheat meals are where you get to enjoy (in moderation) these yummy but not so good for you foods. Why?

Because neglecting your favourite foods leads to bingeing, followed by guilt, and then the neglect of all your efforts. Food guilt can often be worse than the food itself because you go into a mindset of 'oh well, I've blown it now, I may as well keep eating'. And then all the hard work you have put in up until that very moment is out the window. It then causes you stress and anger which in turn has you craving even more bad foods.

So enjoying the occasional splurge helps you stay on track, helps with your discipline, and allows you to really enjoy the treat when you do get it. Include 1-2 cheat meals a week to really succeed at a healthy eating plan. That is 1-2 cheat MEALS not DAYS!!! Have pancakes for breakfast, or enjoy cheesecake for dessert, don't have a blow out the entire day.

The main thing to remember is that cheat meals should be planned and deliberate to ensure that you stick to your 2 cheat meal allowance per week. If you know your meeting friends for dinner and there will be dessert involved, designate that as one of your cheat meals that week. It's better to have a 90% healthy diet and allow for those cheat meals, sticking to it 100% of the time, than to try stick to a 100% healthy diet, with no cheat meals, and only stick to it 60% of the time. You don't want to have to deprive yourself of the things you enjoy most. Life is too short to not enjoy the good foods.

So now you can have your cake and eat it too, but just remember to portion control and plan for it! And try to make it on a day that you have done some exercise.