

Information sheet 4

Planning for small changes

It is very important not to be over ambitious and unrealistic in your goals. When you look through guidelines and plans, be realistic about what you can achieve and perhaps re-adjust your goals accordingly. Smaller targets along the way are far more achievable than one huge unobtainable goal.

It is not realistic to expect to stick rigidly to a diet for weeks at a time. You may forget to buy something, you may have lunch out unexpectedly, friends may call round or you may go out to eat. This is why you need to be flexible, but you do need to understand the principles behind healthy eating so that you don't undo all your good work.

Rigid, authoritarian diets may suit some people, but they can be unhelpful because of one emotion they induce - GUILT. Guilt is not an appropriate reaction to have after eating a cream cake.

So, you've broken your diet plan - so what? You've just delayed reaching your ideal weight, that's all. You should progress forward with a positive attitude and not a guilt ridden one.

Remember, it's what we eat most of the time that makes us fat (or not), not what we eat occasionally. Let us look at ways in which we can help ourselves if the unexpected happens.

If you go out to eat, there are 2 ways of approaching meals:

- let yourself go

or

- control and choose

It's a good idea to think about what you are going to eat and to follow these simple guidelines:

- alcohol - mix it with mineral water, or avoid it all together
- nibbles - keep away from tit-bits
- starters - avoid pate, cream soups, and anything with a sauce. Choose melon, fruit, shellfish and grilled fish
- main courses - choose simple grilled or roasted meals. Avoid rich sauces and fried food, and do not have large helpings
- vegetables and salads - eat as much as you can
- cheese - don't be tempted to eat cheese and biscuits as well as your main meal

- chocolates, cakes and pastries - all are high in calories and saturated fat. Choose fruit salad or sorbets for dessert

Entertaining at home is easier than eating out because you can keep total control. It is possible to give your friends healthy slimming foods without them knowing it.

Experiment and eat with enthusiasm!