



WellnessOne Newsletter

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Frequent Hunger and Sweet Cravings? You May Be Making This Common Mistake

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David Kirchoff, president of Weight Watchers, the world's largest diet company, recently said on their website: "Calorie counting has become unhelpful.

When we have a 100-calorie apple in one hand and a 100-calorie pack of cookies in the other, and we view them as being 'the same' because the calories are the same, it says everything that needs to be said about the limitations of just using calories in guiding food choices."

Kirchoff and Weight Watchers have eliminated the company's popular "Points" system, which encouraged dieters to lose weight by eating any foods as long as they kept the portions small. The new system tries to encourage dieters to consume more natural, less processed food.

According to Time Magazine:

"The radical overhaul, which is the first major alteration to the Points program, comes at a time when Weight Watchers is trying to revive its recession-battered business."

Sources:

» [Time Magazine February 19, 2011](#)

Dr. Mercola's Comments:

This is pretty remarkable news. Weight Watchers has been the front-runner of calorie counting for weight loss for over a decade, so admitting that counting calories is "unhelpful" is a radical move.



Whether it will help or hurt their business remains to be seen, but overall most of the program changes appear to be for the better. I say "most," because there's one rule in particular that could lead some people astray under this new program, and I'll review that in a moment.

What Made Weight Loss Empire Ditch their World Famous System?

In order to be unaware of Weight Watchers, you'd have to have spent the last decade beneath a rock somewhere. Their business has ballooned into a \$2.7 billion weight loss empire since the introduction of their popular Points system in 1997.

The Points system allowed dieters to eat whatever they wanted, but each food was assigned a certain number of points, which simplified the calorie counting process and many millions of people used this system.

The best part about their revised program is the fact that they're now committed to more natural, unprocessed foods, and "punishes" dieters for indulging in foods rich in empty calories, i.e. foods with poor nutritional value.

[David Kirchhoff, President and CEO of Weight Watchers International, explains their decision](#) to change their hallmark system:

"We needed a program that recognized that calories are most definitely not created equal.

We knew that counting, budgeting and planning still made fundamental sense, but we wanted a better and more accurate currency. We wanted a POINTS formula that was much more "opinionated" about food choices beyond just calories."



Better late than never, if you ask me. I've long advocated *against* counting calories for that very reason. You're not going to get healthier, even if you manage to shed pounds, by eating *fewer* cookies than you did before. If you really want to lose weight and improve your health, then you must *replace* empty calories and denatured foods with *nutrients!*

So on this point I applaud Weight Watchers for finally seeing the light. A return to natural, whole (preferably locally grown organic), unprocessed foods is the right way to improve health.

The Return to Natural, Unprocessed Foods is Key for Weight Loss and Health

Time Magazine explains the primary changes to the Points program:

"Like the old program, the new one assigns a point value to pretty much every food item under the sun and calculates a daily ration of points based on a member's height, weight and age. But most of the point values have changed.

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The system now favors foods that are high in protein or fiber, which make the body work harder to convert them into energy and also leave the belly feeling fuller longer. Meanwhile, point values went up for foods loaded with carbohydrates, which are more easily absorbed by the body and turned into fat."

So far so good. Protein is the most satiating food type, beating out carbohydrates and even fat. Simply speaking, eating protein helps keep you feeling full longer.

However, while focusing on consuming more protein in general will likely benefit most people, it's also important to understand that the *amount and type* of protein you need varies dramatically according to your gender, height, weight, exercise levels, and, most importantly, by [your nutritional type](#).

You can decipher your individual requirements when you determine whether you're a protein, carb, or mixed nutritional type.

Protein types, as the name implies, do better on low-carbohydrate, high-protein and high-fat diets. A typical ratio might be 40 percent protein and 30 percent each of fats and carbohydrates, but the amounts could easily shift to 50 percent fats and as little as 10 percent carbohydrates depending on individual genetic requirements.

Carb types, meanwhile, normally feel best when the majority of their food is vegetable carbohydrate. But they too need some protein and fat in their diets. (Mixed types fall somewhere in between.)



Ideal Protein Foods

In addition to determining your ideal amount or ratio of protein, you also want to pay attention to the *type* of protein you eat, because this also varies depending on your nutritional type. Protein types, for instance, thrive on high-purine meats like dark-meat chicken, or high-quality steak, while carb types prefer light meats or even beans as their source of protein.

That said, according to my experience, most people don't eat enough protein so shifting attention to protein over carbs will likely bring most people in the right direction.

Some generally good sources of protein (though you need to find out your nutritional type to really tailor your foods for optimal health) include:

- Eggs (ideally, raw organic and pasture raised)
- Grass-fed beef and bison
- Pasture raised, organic chicken and ostrich

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- Raw grass-fed dairy products (raw milk, raw-milk cheese, and so on.)
- Wild-caught, mercury-free fish (only eat this if you can confirm via lab-testing that it's not polluted)

When choosing protein sources, it's extremely important to find high-quality varieties.

These would be grass-fed (not grain-fed) organic meats, raw (not [pasteurized](#)) dairy products, and wild-caught ([not farm-raised](#)) fish you know is not contaminated with mercury and other pollutants.

Because while protein is very healthy, you will not be doing yourself any favors by eating [grain-fed beef](#) (which is the most widely available in supermarkets), [pesticide-laced chicken](#), or mercury-rich fish, so please pay careful attention to the sources of your protein, and [how they're raised](#).

What about Protein Powders?

There are a number of protein powders on the market, typically used by bodybuilders and the like, but they're also used by many dieters.

I'm not a fan of most protein powders on the market, simply because many contain inferior sources of protein along with artificial sweeteners and flavors. Whey isolate is one such inferior product, because when you remove the fat from the whey, you actually remove important components of its immunological properties, such as phospholipids, [phosphatidylserine](#) and [cortisol](#).



All of these factors render them completely useless from a health perspective.

I do however recommend high quality whey protein made from the raw milk of grass-fed organically-raised cows. Other factors to look for in a high quality whey product include:

- Cold processed, since heat destroys whey's fragile molecular structure
- Minimally processed
- Rich, creamy, full flavor
- Water soluble
- Sweetened naturally, not artificially
- Highly digestible—look for medium chain fatty acids (MCTs), not long chain fatty acids

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This type of protein tends to benefit all nutritional types, but they're particularly well-suited for carb and mixed types. Another good option for high quality protein is raw dairy products like raw milk or raw milk cheese. To find a source near you, check out www.RealMilk.com.

If you are seeking to lose weight it might be best to avoid dairy products with lactose, such as milk, as the lactose, although healthy from grass fed organic cows, is still a sugar and can impair your ability to lose body fat. Butter and many cheeses don't have lactose so they are not problematic. If you aren't seeking to lose body fat then lactose is not an issue.

The Primary Flaw in Weight Watchers' New Program

Now, let's take a look at the major flaw of the new Weight Watchers' program: They allow an *unlimited amount of fruit*. If you've been reading this newsletter for any amount of time, you will immediately know why this could spell trouble for a lot of people.

In all fairness, [David Kirchoff does warn his clients about overconsumption, stating:](#)

"Enjoy the fact that fruits have a PointsPlus value of 0, but don't go completely crazy.

Only 10 percent of Americans eat the recommended amount of fruit, so most of us are not at risk of eating too much fruit on the new program. However, if you already eat a lot of fruit each day, doubling or tripling that will result in slower weight loss.

When in doubt, use common sense, listen to your body's signals (eat some fruit because you're truly hungry, not because you can), and avoid mindless grazing (one of my personal pitfalls)."



Left out of the equation however, is the fact that fructose—including that from fruit—is also very detrimental, health-wise, to anyone who struggles with insulin resistance, metabolic syndrome, diabetes, high blood pressure or high cholesterol; all of which typically go hand in hand with obesity and overweight...

Granted, whole fruits, even though they contain fructose, are not nearly as problematic as fructose from added sugars. One of the reasons for this is believed to be because whole fruits contain high amounts of natural antioxidants, as well as other synergistic compounds that may help counter the detrimental effects of fructose.

But very large portions of fruit daily cannot be recommended for most overweight people.

How Much Fruit is OK if You Want to Lose Weight and Improve Your Health?

In fact, if you're in any of the categories just mentioned (insulin resistant, diabetic, or have high blood pressure or high cholesterol), you really need to be particularly careful about limiting your fructose from fruit to 15 grams per day or less.

Ideally you'll want to avoid ALL sources of fructose *until your insulin stabilizes*, and then proceed with caution.

As you can see in this table, some fruits are very high in fructose, so munching indiscriminately could set you back.

Fruit	Serving Size	Grams of Fructose
Limes	1 medium	0
Lemons	1 medium	0.6
Cranberries	1 cup	0.7
Passion fruit	1 medium	0.9
Prune	1 medium	1.2
Apricot	1 medium	1.3
Guava	2 medium	2.2
Date (Deglet Noor style)	1 medium	2.6
Cantaloupe	1/8 of med. melon	2.8
Raspberries	1 cup	3.0
Clementine	1 medium	3.4
Kiwifruit	1 medium	3.4
Blackberries	1 cup	3.5
Star fruit	1 medium	3.6
Cherries, sweet	10	3.8
Strawberries	1 cup	3.8
Cherries, sour	1 cup	4.0
Pineapple	1 slice (3.5" x .75")	4.0



Fruit	Serving Size	Grams of Fructose
Grapefruit, pink or red	1/2 medium	4.3
Boysenberries	1 cup	4.6
Tangerine/mandarin orange	1 medium	4.8
Nectarine	1 medium	5.4
Peach	1 medium	5.9
Orange (navel)	1 medium	6.1
Papaya	1/2 medium	6.3
Honeydew	1/8 of med. melon	6.7
Banana	1 medium	7.1
Blueberries	1 cup	7.4
Date (Medjool)	1 medium	7.7
Apple (composite)	1 medium	9.5
Persimmon	1 medium	10.6
Watermelon	1/16 med. melon	11.3
Pear	1 medium	11.8
Raisins	1/4 cup	12.3
Grapes, seedless (green or red)	1 cup	12.4
Mango	1/2 medium	16.2
Apricots, dried	1 cup	16.4



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Figs, dried	1 cup	23.0
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Why Counting Calories Doesn't Work

So, to get down to the basics, it's far more important to look at the *source* of the calories than counting them. If it wasn't, you'd be able to substitute one meal a day for a Twinkie and still shed pounds...

Back in 2004, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [report](#) accurately concluded that *carbohydrates* (read sugars and grains) are the reason why Americans have been consuming increasing numbers of calories over the past 30-plus years.

As I've mentioned before, the [number one source of calories](#) in the American diet is from soda, in the form of high fructose corn syrup.

Meanwhile, obesity rates jumped from 14.5 percent of U.S. adults in 1971, to [nearly 28 percent in 2010](#). Previous research linked this increase to a greater intake of salty snacks, pizza and other fast foods -- in other words, a greater intake of carbohydrates, mainly in the form of grains.



What's the Answer?

At the end of the day, your consumption of carbohydrates, whether in the form of grains (including whole grains) and sugars (especially fructose), will determine whether or not you're able to manage your weight and maintain optimal health.

Cutting out or severely limiting grain carbs and sugars can be the U-turn you've been looking for if you are currently overweight and/or your health is suffering.

The real remedy is to return to your kitchen and embrace good old-fashioned home cooking. You, a family member, or someone you pay, simply has to [spend time in the kitchen cooking fresh wholesome meals](#) if you want any hope of staying healthy.

Like many people, I have very little "free time" in my life, but still I am committed to preparing over 95 percent of my meals in order to preserve my health. It is a commitment, a truly important one, and it CAN be done. A major leap forward would be to strive for a diet of 90 percent non-processed food and only 10 percent from other sources.

Not only will you enjoy numerous health benefits, but you will gain the satisfaction of preparing meals and being able to control the ingredients.

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Your Hunger is Your Guide to Your Optimal Fuel

Many do not realize this, but frequent hunger may be a *major clue* that you're not eating correctly. Not only is it an indication that you're consuming the *wrong types* of food, but it's also a sign that you're likely consuming them in *lopsided ratios* for your individual biochemistry.

The beauty of [eating according to your nutritional type](#) is that your food cravings will dissipate, making reducing the sizes of your portions that much easier—no counting of calories or points required.

You can split your meals into five or six smaller portions, and still be far less hungry than you ever were before because your body is finally getting the fuel it needs to thrive.

Typically, finding your optimal diet involves shifting *the ratio* of proteins, fats, and carbohydrates, once you have determined what types of food your body is designed to eat. Optimal health may actually have less to do with the type of food you are eating, but with the *relative percentage of each food* you consume.

If you are eating right for your nutritional type, your meal should leave you with increased energy, noticeable improvements in mental capacity and emotional well-being and should leave you feeling satisfied for several hours.



However, if you feel worse an hour or so after eating, such as:

- You still feel hungry even though you are physically full
- You develop a sweet craving
- Your energy level drops
- You feel hyper, nervous, angry or irritable
- You feel depressed

... then you are likely eating the wrong combination of protein, fat and carbohydrates for your nutritional type.

The best case scenario that can come from Weight Watchers' changing their program is that it may bring millions of more people back to REAL food, opposed to processed "diet" foods. (Just keep a close eye on your fruit consumption.) And that's really where the holy grail of weight loss and optimal health lies.

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