

Recovery Food Plan

A Guide to Clean Abstinence

Recovery Food Plan by Kay Sheppard LMHC

This current food plan supersedes any prior publications

For more information about the food plan and recovery from food addiction, read Food Addiction: The Body Knows and From the First Bite by Kay Sheppard.

Consult your physician before using this or any other food plan.

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Daily Portions

Breakfast	Lunch/Dinner	Metabolic Adjustment	Daily
1 protein	1 protein	1 fruit	1 fat
1 grain or starch	1 grain or starch	1 dairy	
1 dairy	1 cooked vegetable		
1 fruit	1 raw vegetable		

The metabolic adjustment (MA) before bed is in place to feed the sleeping brain for 8 hours. In the event that dinner is very late, have the MA between lunch and dinner to maintain blood glucose levels.

Daily Options

Spice: 1 tablespoon

Condiments: 2 tablespoons

Broth: 1 cup

Consider having 2 cups cooked vegetable or 2 cups raw at each meal to save time and to make interesting soups, stews, casseroles and salads.

Basic Food Plan

BASIC FOOD PLAN	BASIC PLUS FOOD PLAN*
Protein: 4 oz., 2 eggs, Tofu 8 oz.	Protein: 6 oz., red meat 5 oz., 3 eggs, Tofu 12 oz.
Grain: 1 cup	Grain: 1 cup
Starch: 1 cup, 8 oz. potato	Starch: 1 cup, 8 oz. potato

Vegetable: 1 cup	Vegetable: 1 cup
Fruit: 6 oz.	Fruit: 6 oz.
Dairy – Milk: 1 cup	Dairy – Milk: 1 cup
Dairy – Yogurt: 1 cup or 8.6 oz.	Dairy – Yogurt: 1 cup or 8.6 oz.
Dairy – Greek yogurt: ¾ cup or 6 oz.	Dairy – Greek yogurt: ¾ cup or 6 oz.
Dairy – Cottage cheese: ½ cup	Dairy – Cottage cheese: ½ cup
Fat: 1 tablespoon = 3 teaspoons	Fat: 2 tablespoons = 6 teaspoons

** The Basic Plus food plan is for maintenance, men, pregnant/nursing mothers and athletic women.*

Food Plan Foods

Proteins

Basic Plan: 4 oz. | Basic Plus Plan: 6 oz. (except red meat: 5 oz.)

Beef*	Lamb*
Chicken (white meat, no skin)	Pork*
Eggs (2 large / Basic; 3 large / Basic Plus)	Turkey
Fish	Veal*
Shellfish	

** Red meat is limited to three times per week.*

- Check fresh or frozen turkey and chicken for dextrose or other starches or sugars.
- Fish and salmon foil packs are great for travel; not all foil packs are appropriate. Look for water-packed tuna without added flavoring.
- Limit eggs — they are highly allergenic. Basic Plan: 2 eggs, twice per week (4 total). Basic Plus: 3 eggs, twice per week (6 total).
- No Eggbeaters or egg whites.
- Select the leanest product available — animal fat triggers cravings.

Raw equivalents for recipes:

- Basic: 5½ oz. raw meat or fish = 4 oz. cooked protein.
- Basic Plus: 6.75 oz. raw = 5 oz. cooked red meat; 8.25 oz. raw = 6 oz. cooked poultry and fish.

Vegetarian Protein or Starch

- Edamame: 1 cup without shells, fresh or frozen
- Soybeans: 1 cup
- Soy milk: 2 cups unsweetened, with only 2 ingredients: soy and water
- Tempeh: Basic 4 oz. plain soy without rice or other added grains; Basic Plus 6 oz.
- Tofu: Basic 8 oz.; Basic Plus 12 oz. — weigh before cooking or patting dry; keep unused portion covered in water

Beware of overuse of soy products, which may cause health problems. We never recommend soy be used exclusively for protein.

Grains and Starches: 1 cup cooked

Amaranth	Oat bran: ½ cup raw
Barley (hulled or hullless, not pearled)	Oats, steel cut: 1/3 cup raw
Barley flakes: ½ cup raw	Oat groats
Buckwheat groats (not a form of wheat)	Quinoa, all colors
Cream of buckwheat: 1/3 cup raw	Quinoa flakes: ½ cup raw
Cream of brown rice: 1/3 cup raw	Rice, brown
Cream of rye: 1/3 cup raw	Ryeberries
Kasha (roasted buckwheat)	Teff, brown or ivory
Millet	Tempeh 4 oz. (with rice or other grain as ingredient)

All grains are measured one cup cooked; raw equivalents noted above.

Rolled oats are not on the plan — they are too processed and trigger cravings.

Beans: 1 cup starch (rinse starchy liquid before using)

We do not use beans for protein — they deliver too much starch and too little protein. Soybeans and soybean products are the exception: soybeans, edamame, tofu, and tempeh.

Aduki beans	Mung beans
Black beans	Navy beans
Black-eyed peas	Northern beans
Cannellini beans	Pinto beans
Chickpeas	Red beans
Edamame	Refried beans (fat-free)
Garbanzo beans	Soybeans
Kidney beans	Split peas

Lentils

White beans

Lima beans

White kidney beans

Starchy Vegetables

- Peas: 1 cup, fresh or frozen
- Potatoes (all varieties): 8 oz. cooked, 10 oz. raw*
- Squash: 1 cup — all hard squashes such as Acorn, Butternut, Spaghetti and Hubbard
- Sweet Potatoes: 8 oz. cooked, 10 oz. raw*
- Yams: 8 oz. cooked, 10 oz. raw*

** If the cooking process dehydrates the potato (e.g., oven-baked fries or slices), measure 10 oz. before baking. Whole potatoes can be measured at 8 oz. after baking.*

Vegetables: 1 cup

Artichoke hearts (canned in water)

Mushrooms

Asparagus

Okra

Bamboo shoots

Onion

Bean sprouts

Parsley

Beets

Parsnips

Belgian endives

Pasta sauce (no natural flavors or sugars)

Bok choy

Peppers

Broccoli

Pickles, dill*

Brussels sprouts

Pimentos

Cabbage

Pumpkin (both a vegetable and a fruit)

Carrots

Radishes

Cauliflower

Rutabaga

Celery

Salsa: 1 cup cooked vegetable (jar/can); 1 cup raw (fresh)

Celery root

Sauerkraut

Cilantro

Scallions

Cucumber

Snow pea pods

Eggplant

Spinach

Endive

Sprouts

Escarole

Sugar snap peas

Fennel

Swiss chard

Garlic

Tomatoes (both a vegetable and a fruit)

Green and yellow beans

Greens

Hearts of palm

Jicama

Kale

Leeks

Lettuce (all varieties)

Turnips

V8 Juice (not low sodium): 1 cup = 1 cooked vegetable**

Water chestnuts

Watercress

Yellow crookneck squash

Zucchini

** Check the label on dill pickles carefully — watch for natural flavors and other unapproved ingredients.*

*** We prefer Knudsen Organic Low Sodium Very Veggie Juice.*

It is okay to have 2 cups cooked at one meal and 2 cups raw at the other.

Use 3 cups of raw or frozen vegetables to make 2 cups cooked for recipes.

Fruits: 6 oz. fresh or frozen

Apple

Apricot

Berries

Cantaloupe

Cranberries

Figs, raw

Grapefruit

Honeydew

Kiwi

Lemon

Lime

Nectarine

Orange

Papaya

Peach

Pear

Pineapple

Plum

Pumpkin (both a fruit and a vegetable)

Rhubarb

Tangerine

Tomato (both a fruit and a vegetable)

Watermelon

No applesauce, cherries, grapes, bananas, persimmons, pomegranates or mangoes.

No dried fruits (concentrated sugar).

Check frozen fruits for added sugar.

Weigh fruit before cooking.

Dairy: Non-Fat

- Cottage cheese: ½ cup (1% is acceptable)
- Milk, fat-free/skim: 1 cup
- Powdered milk, fat-free: 1/3 cup
- Yogurt, 0% fat, plain: 1 cup or 8.6 oz.
- Greek yogurt, 0% fat, plain: ¾ cup or 6 oz.

Dairy Substitutes

- Soy milk: 1 cup unsweetened (only 2 ingredients: soy and water)
- 2 oz. any protein or tempeh (without rice or other grain)
- 4 oz. tofu
- 1 egg

We absolutely abstain from all coconut, oat, hemp or nut milk and yogurt.

Fats

Basic Plan: 1 tablespoon (3 teaspoons) | Basic Plus: 2 tablespoons (6 teaspoons)

Olive oil	Avocado oil
Other seed oils	Coconut oil
Nut oils	Flaxseed oil
Primal Kitchen Mayo with Avocado Oil (except flavors with fruit juice concentrate)	Grapeseed oil
Sesame oil	Mayonnaise: Duke's regular (not fat free)
Sesame oil, toasted or roasted	Mayonnaise (homemade — see Absolutely Abstinent Cookbook p. 103)
	Newman's Own Olive Oil and Vinegar

Herbs and Spices: 1 tablespoon per day

Basil	Ginger
Chili powder	Himalayan pink salt
Cinnamon	Italian spices
Dill	Nutmeg
Garlic powder	

Condiments: 2 tablespoons per day

Bragg Liquid Aminos	Mustard
Dill pickle	Salsa
Horseradish	Tomato sauce

Hot sauce

Vinegar: white, red wine, rice and apple cider
(no balsamic)

Ketchup (see Absolutely Abstinent Cookbook p. 96)

Yogurt

Milk

Trigger Foods

- We abstain from all forms of alcohol, cocoa, chocolate, caffeine, decaf coffee and artificially sweetened products including gum, desserts, yogurt, candy and soda. We abstain from all brands of diet soda.
- We abstain from all forms of sugar such as sucrose, fructose, corn sweetener, dextrose, maltodextrose, polydextrose, whey, syrups, malt, rice sweeteners, honey, natural flavors, mannitol, sorbitol, caramel color, stevia, inulin, artificial sweetener packets and liquid, guar gum, xanthan gum, isomalt, carrageenan and licorice root, and others. If natural flavors appear on the ingredient list, assume it is sugar unless you call and check with the company. If they cannot disclose the ingredient, do not buy the product.
- We abstain from all forms of flour such as corn and corn meal, wheat, rice, barley, rye, almond, coconut, bean and products such as corn chips and tacos.
- We abstain from all forms of wheat products including macaroni, noodles, bread, pizza, crackers, pita, pretzels, bagels, muffins, shredded wheat, whole grain wheat, wheat flour, modified food starch, triticale, kamut, bulgur and spelt.
- We abstain from all high-fat foods including fried food, butter, sour cream, cream cheese, dairy products above 1% fat, hard cheese, ricotta cheese, nuts, seeds, olives and avocados. (Cottage cheese at 1% fat is the exception.)
- We abstain from the following fruits: dried fruit, applesauce, bananas, grapes, cherries, fruit juice, mangoes, raisins, persimmons and pomegranate.
- We abstain from puffed and popped products including popped corn, puffed grain cereal and rice cakes.
- We abstain from rolled oats.
- We abstain from corn and all corn products.

Guidelines to Abstinence

- Check labels for trigger ingredients every time you buy — food producers change ingredients and add sugar without notice. Buy fresh and frozen foods that have not been processed, and whole grains (except wheat). If natural flavors appear, call the company. If they cannot identify the ingredient, do not purchase the product.
- Prepare food by baking, boiling, grilling, broiling, steaming, stir frying, or air frying in cooking spray. Be sure the spray is alcohol-free.
- When fat content goes down, starches replace it. Beware of non-fat and low-fat food — check ingredients carefully for trigger substances.
- Weighing and measuring food is crucial to the success of the recovery food plan. This is how we manage volume. Volume triggers addiction and cravings. Any small deviation from the food plan renders it useless.

- Schedule meals approximately 4½ to 5 hours apart to maintain level metabolism.
- Use a variety of foods to avoid boredom. Using a single food frequently may indicate it is a trigger food.
- Eliminate caffeinated and decaf coffee — caffeine is an addictive substance that stimulates appetite. Decaf is not safe for us and has proved to be a cause of relapse.
- Plan, report, and commit your food to a sponsor a day ahead. Keep it honest by reporting changes.
- Limit eggs — they are highly allergenic. Basic Plan: 2 eggs twice per week (4 total). Basic Plus: 3 eggs twice per week (6 total).
- Iodized salt contains sugar, which keeps iodine in suspension. Look for salt without iodine. Assume restaurant salt contains iodine and sugar unless marked otherwise. Use an iodine supplement. The better choice is Himalayan pink salt, which contains iodine, magnesium, zinc, iron and calcium.
- Check labels on all meat products for added starch and sugar such as dextrose in fresh and frozen chicken and turkey. Processed meats often contain sugar, starch and too much fat. Fatty meats such as chicken thighs can trigger cravings.
- Check your toothpaste and mouthwash. Choose only alcohol-free and glycerin-free brands. Some Arm & Hammer toothpastes are appropriate. Thera Breath mouthwash is currently acceptable — but check ingredients before buying, as not all Thera Breath products qualify. Unflavored dental floss is the best choice.
- Get support by attending meetings and food groups. Get a sponsor who will share experience, strength and hope with you.
- When ordering in restaurants: ask for protein with no added fat, seasoning or marinade; a dry baked potato; a large salad without bacon, eggs, cheese or croutons, with oil and vinegar on the side (no balsamic vinegar). Take your cup and scale with you.
- There is no cheese on the recovery food plan except cottage cheese. Read the label carefully — it is getting harder to find clean cottage cheese.
- Animal fat triggers cravings. We abstain from cheese, cream, sour cream, fatty meats and other high-fat animal foods. The addictive quality of cheese has been compared to heroin: it contains "morphine-like compounds" called casomorphins that attach to the brain's opiate receptors.
- Limit red meat (beef, lamb, pork and veal) to three times per week.
- We abstain from fatty meats including dark-meat poultry and processed proteins such as sausages. For ground meat, look for the lowest fat percentage (e.g., 96% extra-lean ground beef, or ground turkey breast). To lower fat content, mix half ground turkey with half ground turkey breast.
- Make water your drink of choice. Adequate hydration supports abstinence. Calculate your hydration needs based on your body weight.
- Avoid extreme exercise programs. The food plan supports about 45 minutes of exercise a day.
- Use a multi-vitamin daily — good nutrition supports abstinence.
- Get 8 hours of sleep.

You Need to Know

The amount of protein in the food plan is favorable to the brain chemistry of the food addict. Combining protein with carbohydrate makes the food plan work because the protein moderates the production of brain serotonin from the carbohydrates. We abstain from refined carbohydrates, which are the most effective precursor of brain serotonin. They flood the brain with this chemical, which acts like a painkiller and a tranquilizer. Since protein decreases the production of brain serotonin when combined with more slowly metabolized complex carbohydrate, it is vital to a successful food plan. Reduction or elimination of high-quality protein foods will render the food plan useless.

Definition of Abstinence (From the First Bite, p. 89)

“One of the greatest struggles in recovery is defining abstinence, which is a must for reaching and maintaining physical recovery. Some who have difficulty staying abstinent never get physically clean. When a food addict ingests even a small amount of an addictive substance, cravings are triggered and along with them the urge to binge.

It has become popular to use an abbreviated (no sugar, flour, wheat) definition of abstinence. There is a problem with this abbreviation. We could abstain from sugar, flour and wheat for the rest of our lives and continue to stay in the disease forever by eating high-fat foods, volume and refined carbohydrate snacks... This definition is just too limited. Abstinence needs to be defined as abstinence from all addictive foods and behaviors, including personal binge foods and volume, plus a commitment to a weighed and measured food plan.”

Volume triggers addiction, just like refined foods. Any small deviation from the food plan renders it useless. When in doubt, leave it out.