

## **Ask the Dietician- The Pocket Diet**

**Did you realize that the pocket pitas would be a good aid in control portion beforehand, or did you come to that realization as you were developing the plan?**

Using a pocket pita as a method of portion control was the inspiration for this plan. As dietitians we are always looking for innovative ways to teach clients to control their portions. For many toting around measuring cups and food scales is unrealistic and in visioning that a ½ cup equals the size a tennis ball is too abstract. The pocket pita is a convenient method for portion control. Best of all, it tastes great!

**What do you think might surprise veteran dieters about this plan?**

That they can eat great food and still lose weight. Many people feel that the only way to lose weight is to live on small amounts of bland food and feel hungry all the time. This could not be farther from the truth. The Pocket Diet provides great tasting and satisfying food throughout the weight loss process.

**What do you think folks will like most about the plan?**

Convenience. Few people have time to spend hours preparing meals at home. The Pocket Diet provides quick, healthy and portable meal options.

**Low-carb diets definitely seem to be falling out of favor, yet a lot of promising studies were done on them at the height of the craze. In general, would you say there's anything nutrition experts learned from that research that they now take into account when creating plans that don't restrict carbs?**

The low-carb craze made many people realize that they were consuming way too many simple carbohydrates, namely in the form of sodas, baked goods and candies. The Pocket Diet provides a variety of complex (high fiber) carbohydrate, lean proteins and veggies. A perfect balance for lifelong healthy eating.

**Any tricks built into the Pocket Diet that help control hunger?**

Absolutely, fiber, water and food! Foods that contain fiber and have high water content fill you up faster and with fewer calories, than other foods. Many diet plans recommend an extremely low calorie intake. Weight loss is achieved by burning more calories than you consume, however this should not leave you hungry all day. With the Pocket Diet you would be satisfied from eating great tasting foods.

**Many of the diets we write about weigh in at just 1200 calories a day--300 to 800 fewer calories than most women would get on the Pocket Diet. Do the extra calories make the plan easier to stick with?**

Caloric intake of 1200 calories is an appropriate level for a very small percentage of the population. We realize that people come in a variety of sizes and activity levels and therefore we have provided a variety of meal plans. Many people find short term success with low calories diets. If calorie intake is too low for an individual.

**We understand that there are three separate meal plans that were developed for people of body types and activity levels. Can any combination of breakfast, lunch, dinner and snack options be combined as long as they stay within the calorie ranges given in the book?**

Not all people like "breakfast foods" at breakfast. You can switch the meals into any order or combination. However, it is very important to stick to the scheduled meal times. Consuming all of the items in one or two meal is less effective.

**Are there any other guidelines to follow besides these daily calorie limits?**

Yes, the book provides guidelines for water intake, limiting saturated fat and getting adequate physical activity, all key factors in healthy living.

**Not all of the dinner recipes in the book are served in pocket pitas. Do you think that adding variety in this way will help folks stick with the plan longer?**

We realize that variety and versatility are key elements in making lifelong healthy changes. The "out of pocket" meals are a great opportunity to practice portion control without the pocket pita.

**In the Pocket Diet booklet, you tell people to eat every 3 to 4 hours. What's the weight loss advantage to eating this way?**

Eating multiple small meals has a number of benefits for weight management. Eating every three to four hours helps to control blood sugar and prevent the swings that may cause hunger and fatigue. It also helps to optimize metabolism by burning calories throughout the day. Furthermore, it is often easier to make healthy eating choices when you first start to get hungry instead of waiting until you are starving.

**Are there recipes you'd recommend before the others for someone who wants to lose weight as quickly as possible without jeopardizing their health?**

All of the menus in the Pocket Diet are nutritionally sound and great for weight loss. For those looking to get a jump start on the process selecting meal items with lots of vegetables is a great place to start.

**What kind of exercise would you recommend to people on this plan?**

Exercise is an important part of a healthy weight loss plan. For those who have not exercised in a while, a walking program is a great place to start.

**Can you think of any reason why this diet couldn't safely be a permanent way of eating?**

As with any diet changes, those with medical conditions should seek approval from their medical physician or dietitian before beginning a new meal plan.

**If you were recommending this plan to someone, what would you tell them to get them excited about it?**

This plan is for those looking to eat healthy, great tasting, and convenient foods. See how well the pocket plan can work for you!

**Can you offer some words of encouragement to readers who'd like to try this plan?**

Losing weight does not mean a life being hungry and eating bland foods. It is possible to eat great food and shed the pounds. Let us show you how!

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