

General Information About Medifast

What is Medifast?

Medifast is a meal replacement program that helps most people lose weight faster than traditional food-based diet plans. Medifast products come in individual packets that you mix with water to create a "shake" similar to an instant breakfast drink. Medifast is available in a wide variety of flavors as well as several alternate choices including protein bars, creamy soups, chili, oatmeal, and hot cocoa.

How does Medifast work?

The clinically proven results of Medifast are based on the use of a defined formula diet. The program was carefully designed to create a gap between the calories you take in and the amount your body needs. Each nutritionally balanced meal replacement is formulated with a proven combination of carbohydrates and protein to allow you to successfully lose weight without losing muscle.

How fast do you lose?

Women average 2 to 4 pounds a week, men slightly faster (up to five pounds a week or more). Medifast low calorie diets require medical monitoring to minimize the potential for health risks.

Is it safe?

Medifast programs have been recommended by over 15,000 physicians and used by over one million customers. Medifast has been providing a clinically proven approach to weight loss and nutrition for over 20 years.

Has the use of Medifast been researched?

Over the past 20 years, Medifast has been recommended by the over 15,000 physicians. Research studies at Johns Hopkins University as well as the National Institute for Health have shown the plan to be very effective as well as medically safe.

Does it contain harmful herbs or additives?

No. Medifast does NOT contain any added caffeine, stimulants, ephedrine or other herbs that might be harmful to your body.

What is Super Citrimax?

Citrimax contains a natural appetite suppressant made from the vine of a South Asian fruit. Super Citrimax works without stimulating the central nervous system so it does not cause problems with heart rate, blood pressure or other symptoms such as insomnia or nervousness.

Are any Medifast products dairy free?

The Ready-to-Drink products are dairy-free.

What is the difference between Medifast 55 and Medifast 70?

They are very similar except for the protein content. Medifast 55 has 11 grams of protein per serving while Medifast 70 has 14 grams per serving. The Medifast 70 also has about 10 more calories per packet.

What is the difference between shakes and alternate products?

Medifast shakes include all flavors of the Medifast 55, Medifast 70 and Medifast Plus. Shakes should be used for at least three of your supplements each day.

Alternate products are supplements that may be substituted in place of a shake once or twice a day. These include Medifast Supplement bars, Creamy soups, Chili, Oatmeal, and Hot cocoa.

What is Take Shape Weight Maintenance?

Take Shape Weight Maintenance products are recommended for use as a part of a weight maintenance or transition plan, but can also be used in a weight loss program for people with less than 15 pounds to lose.

Why should I limit the Medifast bars to one per day?

Using more than one bar per day may affect your ketosis level and decrease the speed of weight loss on a complete program. The manufacturing of a solid product requires a different processing method for binding the carbohydrates with proteins. This results in a slightly higher carbohydrate level than the powdered Medifast products. However, some patients are very successful using two bars per day as a part of their meal replacement program.

Why do Medifast Supplement Bars contain partially hydrogenated vegetable oils?

The partially hydrogenated vegetable oils (cottonseed, soybean, palm kernel oil) in the bar ingredients is in the coating of the bars. The partial hydrogenation of oil is necessary to produce a stable coating for the bars and for preservation purposes. If you are concerned about partial hydrogenation of oils, because of trans fatty acids, these are in amounts so small that the FDA does not require them to be declared.

What is a Medifast snack?

The Medifast Fast Soups and Multi-grain Crackers are considered snacks. They provide the option of an extra treat, but they should not be used in place of a regular supplement such as the shakes. Fast Soups can be used once or twice a day, while Crackers should be limited to one serving per day.

Medifast Plans

What are the Medifast plan options?

The 5 and 1 plan (usually 800 - 1000 calories per day) is recommended for most individuals who have a moderate amount of weight to lose. Typically participants will maintain a weight loss of 2 to 5 pounds per week while on this program. For those who have a significant amount of weight to lose, Medifast offers a lower calorie Complete program that should be used only under the strict supervision of a physician. Medifast low calorie diets require physician monitoring to minimize the potential for health risks. A regular or certified Health Advisor is not a substitute for a physician or a qualified medical practitioner for monitoring patients using Medifast low calorie products.

Can you alternate between the plans?

Yes. Both the Complete and the 5 and 1 plans will maintain the protein balance of ketosis. With Medifast 55 and 70, you can start with a Complete program, then switch to a 5 and 1 plan or even go back and forth between the two options. For example, you might decide to do a complete program during the week, and then switch to a 5 and 1 plan on the weekend.

What can be in the 5 and 1 plan meal?

Your daily meal should consist of two things: a serving of lean meat and either a green salad or a serving of low-starch vegetables. For the meat serving, females should have between 4 to 5 ounces; males should have 6 to 7 ounces.

What can I put on the salad?

Your salad can include 1 to 2 cups of any kind of salad greens along with up to ¼ cup total of any combination of raw vegetables such as peppers, onions, cucumbers, celery, mushrooms, radishes, alfalfa or bean sprouts, broccoli, carrots, tomatoes, or cabbage. You may use 1 to 2 tablespoons of low-fat or non-fat salad dressing.

Which vegetables can I eat if I don't want a salad?

You can have between 1 to 1 1/2 cups of any low-starch vegetables including asparagus, green beans, beets, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, snow peas, spinach, zucchini, or tomatoes.

Are there any special guidelines for Medifast customers over age 65?

Maintaining a healthy weight is beneficial for people of all ages. Everyone needs to obtain a healthy weight to live life to its fullest. The Medifast program helps their customers reach their healthy weight. As a person grows older, it is imperative that they remain healthy as they lose their weight. This is why Medifast has set up some guidelines for customers over the age of 65.

- Do not use the complete program
- Maintain a minimum of 1200 Calories a day while on the program.
- Use Medifast Products (Shakes, Bars, Soups, Oatmeal, Chili, etc.) in addition to a meal plan which includes protein and salad or vegetables
- You can request more information about the Medifast program for seniors by calling 800-572-4417

Ketosis

What is ketosis?

The nutrient balance of Medifast combined with the low-calorie level causes the fat stores to release free fatty acids that are converted by the liver into an energy source called ketones. This mild state of "ketosis" helps the body achieve rapid weight loss while preserving muscle tissue. Ketosis also helps eliminate physical hunger while providing good levels of energy.

Is ketosis harmful?

No, the level of ketosis achieved is very mild – just strong enough to protect you from losing muscle tissue. This mild level of ketosis has not been shown to cause harm to the body.

How long does it take to get ketosis built?

Plan for about three days of being on Medifast for building the ketosis level. If you falloff the plan, it will generally take two to three days to rebuild the level again to the point where you no longer feel hunger or fatigue.

Soy

What type of soy is in Medifast?

Medifast uses Supro® brand soy protein, a high-quality complete protein derived from soybeans. This product is produced by DuPont's Protein Technologies, a company that has been conducting research on the benefits of soy protein for over 30 years.

What are the benefits of soy?

In addition to the general health benefits of a quality protein source, soy has been shown to be preventive against cardiovascular disease. The FDA has stated that "combined with a diet low in saturated fat, an intake of 25 grams of soy protein per day may reduce the risk of heart disease."

Does soy lower cholesterol levels?

Some studies have shown that soy protein enhances bile acid secretion, which lowers blood cholesterol levels. Ongoing research in the area may eventually bring stronger conclusions.

Is soy good for osteoporosis?

Naturally occurring isoflavones (such as those in the Supro® brand soy protein) have been shown to increase the mineral content and mineral density of bones. Soy protein may also protect against the risk of fractures and osteoporosis because it promotes an optimal calcium balance.

Medical Monitoring

Do I need to see a doctor?

Medifast strongly recommends that you see your doctor for a general exam and blood test panel before you begin the program.

What lab tests should I have done?

If your physician feels that lab work is necessary, then lab tests should include a CBC, chemistry panel, lipid profile, thyroid panel, and urinalysis. If you are over age 40 or have a history of heart disease, please consult your physician regarding an EKG.

What is the doctor looking for with the lab tests and EKG?

The tests are designed to verify that you don't have any unknown illnesses or medical conditions that could put you at risk for coping with the Medifast plan. The reason for the EKG is to make sure you don't have any previously diagnosed heart problems or heart disease that would be a problem if you do the Medifast plan.

How often should I see my doctor?

Follow-up visits with your physician should be done from once a month to once every three months. At each visit, you should have a CBC and a chemistry profile that tests electrolytes, blood sugar, etc. Monthly visits are recommended if you have diabetes, heart disease or other significant history.

Can I use Medifast if I'm on prescription medications?

Yes, most medications for chronic conditions such as depression, thyroid or hormone deficiency, etc. may be continued while you are on Medifast. Check with your doctor regarding dosage adjustments. If you are taking more than 20 mg of prednisone a day, you should not do Medifast.

What about blood pressure medications?

Your physician may change the dose of your blood pressure medication while you are on Medifast. Watch for any of these symptoms that can indicate your medication dose needs to be changed: feeling tired, weak or "washed out," legs feeling rubbery or weak, headaches, feeling dizzy or light-headed, or becoming more fatigued after several weeks of feeling great.

Women's Health

What is Medifast Plus for Women's Health?

Medifast Plus for Women's Health is a specially designed meal-replacement supplement, formulated to relieve and prevent the agonizing symptoms of menopause. This product provides a safe and effective solution for many symptoms of menopause.

Who should use Medifast Plus for Women's Health?

Medifast Plus for Women's Health is recommended for Women age 35-60 who are experiencing the symptoms of menopause. This may include but is not limited to: hot flashes, mood swings, night sweats, fatigue, vaginal dryness, loss of libido, headaches, anxiety, and insomnia.

Why does Medifast Plus for Women's Health help control the symptoms of menopause?

Medifast Plus for Women's Health is formulated with the natural herbs black cohosh, chaste tree berry, and echinacea purpurea, which studies have shown may reduce menopausal symptoms. Research suggests that black cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*) provides hormonal support during menopause and may also reduce hot flashes and mood swings. Studies also suggest that chaste tree berry (*Vitex agnus castus*) may help balance hormone levels. Echinacea purpurea (purple cone flower) is known for its ability to strengthen the immune system. In menopause, echinacea purpurea may fight off recurrent vaginal and bladder infections as some studies suggest. Finally, Medifast Plus for Women's Health is soy-based. Clinical studies have noted the benefits of soy for years including its ability to decrease negative symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats, fatigue, and irritability.

Coronary Health

What is coronary heart disease?

Coronary heart disease is when the coronary arteries develop into narrowed or clogged with plaque deposits on the inside wall. The narrowing of the arteries reduces flow of blood to the heart and increases the chances of a blood clot blocking the artery, resulting in a heart attack.

What causes coronary heart disease?

Coronary heart disease is caused by narrowing of the inside walls of the coronary arteries. This narrowing decreases and sometimes completely cuts off the supply of oxygen and nutrients to the heart. Narrowing of the inside walls usually happens when a person has high levels of cholesterol, a fat-like substance, in the blood. Cholesterol and fat, flowing in the blood, builds up on the walls of the arteries. The buildup thickens the arteries and can slow or block the circulation of blood. When the level of cholesterol in the blood is high, there is a greater possibility that it will be deposited onto the artery walls. High blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, and smoking doubles your chance of developing heart disease. Obesity increases the possibility of developing high blood cholesterol and high blood pressure, and physical inactivity increases the risk of heart attack.

What are the symptoms of coronary heart disease?

Early signs of coronary heart disease include chest pain or shortness of breath. A person may feel burning, tightness, heaviness, pain, pressure, or squeezing, usually in your chest but sometimes also in the arms, neck, or jaws. Some people can have heart attacks without ever having any of these symptoms.

What are the benefits of Medifast Plus for Coronary Health?

Medifast Plus for Coronary Health is a safe and effective meal replacement supplement specially formulated to protect the heart against disease. Formulated with the highest quality nutrients, vitamins and minerals, Medifast Plus for Coronary Health provides a natural defense against heart conditions brought about by improper diets.

Medifast Plus for Coronary Health contains Coenzyme Q10. This nutrient has been shown in studies to reduce plaque deposits in the arteries and reduce the incidences of plaque rupture, both of which are precursors to heart attacks.

Amino acids are vital to maintaining heart health. Medifast Plus for Coronary Health contains amino acids that have been shown in studies to prevent fatty build-up in the heart and liver. This product also features Pycnogenol®, which acts as the body's first line of defense against heart disease and as an antioxidant.

Diabetes

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a severe, life-threatening condition in which the body loses its ability to turn glucose (sugar) from food into useable energy. The muscle cells and other tissues in the body require specific levels of glucose and carbohydrates to maintain their function. The level of glucose absorbed into the bloodstream by the intestines, and the method by which glucose enters the body's cells, is regulated by a hormone called Insulin. This is produced in the pancreas, a gland located behind the stomach. Diabetes usually develops later in life, after 45 years of age and which used to be known as "Adult Onset Diabetes" or "Non-Insulin Dependent Diabetes Mellitus (NIDDM)- is known today as Type II Diabetes.

What causes diabetes?

People with diabetes either produce too little insulin or their cells do not respond to its action, resulting in abnormally high levels of blood sugar. When sugars are above the normal range (between 80 - 140 mg/dL), the condition is called hyperglycemia.

What are the types of diabetes?

- **Type 1** - A disease in which the body does not produce any insulin, most often occurring in children and young adults. People with Type 1 diabetes must take daily insulin injections to stay alive. Type 1 diabetes accounts for 5 to 10 percent of diabetes. The tendency to develop diabetes may be inherited.
- **Type 2** - A metabolic disorder resulting from the body's inability to make enough, or properly use insulin. It is the most common form of the disease. Type 2 diabetes accounts for 90 - 95 % of diabetes. Type 2 diabetes is nearing epidemic proportions, due to an increased number of older Americans, and a greater prevalence of obesity, requiring a strict weight reducing diet and exercise program.

Is diabetes curable?

No, but it is manageable. In people with Type 2 diabetes, glucose (sugar) builds up in the blood. But with treatment, your blood sugar levels may go down to normal again. But this does not mean you are cured. Instead, a blood sugar level in your target range shows that your treatment plan is working and that you are taking care of your diabetes.

How is diabetes treated?

The aim of treatment is to keep blood glucose levels as close to normal levels as safely as possible without causing low blood sugar (hypoglycemia). Such low blood sugar levels may result from a change in the content or timing of meals, or from increased physical activity, or from over-treatment.

- **Type 1** - Daily injections of insulin, together with dietary control and regular blood glucose testing, form the basis of an effective treatment program. Insulin mimics the body's own production of the natural hormone. Delivery by injection and careful storage in cooled conditions are required to retain purity.
- **Type 2** - Dietary control is often sufficient in treating this condition. Weight reduction in the overweight person, an exercise program, and regular blood glucose testing, combined with oral medications, may be required to lower sugar levels. In some cases, insulin may be required to lower blood sugar levels.

Can I do Medifast if I'm diabetic?

If you are a Type II diabetic (adult onset), you should be able to do Medifast just fine. We suggest you monitor your blood sugar readings once or twice a day as well as stay in close contact with your physician for instructions on making changes in your medications.

What is the difference between Medifast Plus for Diabetics and the rest of the Medifast line?

Medifast Plus For Diabetics has been specially formulated for Diabetics. This product contains less than 6 grams of sugar per serving and 9 total carbohydrates per serving. Medifast Plus For Diabetics has been certified by the Glycemic Research Institute to make the claim "LOW GLYCEMIC" and is authorized to use the Glycemic Research Institute's Seal of Approval.

How do I use Medifast Plus For Diabetics For Weight Loss?

Medifast recommends that you consult with your primary care physician or diabetes specialist before beginning a program using Medifast Plus for Diabetics. You should discuss blood sugar monitoring, oral diabetes agents and changes to your insulin regimen with your physician before starting the program. We suggest using Medifast Plus for Diabetics as a program that includes 5-6 supplements and one meal per day. Medifast Plus for Diabetics is recommended as a physician supervised weight loss program for Type II diabetics only.

How should I use Medifast Plus For Diabetics for General Nutrition or Weight Maintenance?

Medifast recommends that you consult with your primary care physician or diabetes specialist before beginning a program using Medifast Plus for Diabetics. You should discuss blood sugar monitoring, oral diabetes agents and changes to your insulin regimen with your physician before starting the program. We suggest a program that incorporates 1-4 Medifast Plus For Diabetics supplements into your current meal plan.

Should I continue my oral diabetes medication?

It is advised to check your blood sugar at least 2 – 3 times daily, especially at the beginning of the Medifast program. If your blood sugar levels fall below the range specified by your doctor, you should seek the advice of your physician. Medifast products provide a lower intake of calories and carbohydrates than your current diet.

What if I'm on insulin?

Prior to beginning the program, Medifast recommends that you consult with your physician about your current insulin dosage. Blood sugar testing should be performed several times throughout the day. As your blood sugar level drops, continue consulting with your doctor about your insulin requirements.

Can I take diuretics while I'm on Medifast?

Unless absolutely necessary, avoid taking diuretics while you are on Medifast. If you are currently taking a diuretic, check with your doctor before making changes. You may need wean off the medication slowly rather than stopping it abruptly.

Joint Health

What is Arthritis?

Arthritis encompasses more than 100 disease and conditions that affect joints, the surrounding tissues, and other connective tissues. According to the National Arthritis Foundation, arthritis affects nearly one of every six Americans, making it one of the most common diseases in the United States. By the year 2020, an estimated 60 million people will be affected. While all Americans are at risk of arthritis, the prevalence of this disease is higher among women than men. In addition, arthritis is the leading cause of disability, limiting daily activities for more than 7 million citizens.

Does being overweight affect arthritis?

Being overweight is associated with increased risk of osteoarthritis, and weight loss reduces the risk of knee osteoarthritis. Physical activity helps maintain joint health and may also reduce the risk of other adverse outcomes unrelated to arthritis, such as premature death, heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and colon cancer. Studies indicate that an exercise program can improve aerobic capacity and alleviate depression and anxiety among people with arthritis.

What is Medifast Plus for Joint Health?

Medifast Plus for Joint Health is a specially designed meal-replacement supplement, specially formulated to relieve the excruciating symptoms associated with arthritis and poor joint health.

Who should use Medifast Plus for Joint Health?

Medifast Plus for Joint Health is recommended for individuals over the age of eighteen who suffer with painful joints due to arthritis and/or injury.

Why does Medifast Plus for Joint Health help relieve pain?

Medifast Plus for Joint Health is formulated with high quality glucosamine and chondroitin. Glucosamine is a nutrient shown in studies to help regenerate the cushioning components of joints and other tissues. Research suggests that glucosamine makes joints more elastic, may increase range of motion and often slows or even reverses joint damage. The nutrient chondroitin has been noted in studies to help draw more moisture into cartilage to provide support and protection against further destruction of the joint.

Fit!

What is Fit!?

Fit! is a line of great tasting, high energy foods that are power packed with all the vitamins and minerals your youngster needs to stay healthy and in shape! Specially formulated for adolescents ages 10-16, Fit! will provide your kids with the energy required to keep them going all day long.

Is obesity in children a problem?

According to the American Academy of Family Physicians (www.aafp.org), “the number of children who are obese is increasing in the United States. Approximately 21 percent of 12-to-17-year-old adolescents are obese, up from 15 percent in the 1960s, and about 23 percent of 6- to-11-year-old children are obese, compared with 15 percent in the 1960s. Overweight young people, particularly those who are older, tend to remain overweight and, in general, have a 1.5- to 2.0-fold increase in the risk of being overweight as adults.”

What causes obesity in children?

Obesity in adolescents can be attributed to one or more of the following factors:

- Physiological – metabolism, genetics, body composition
- Environmental – parenting, accessibility to food, varying standards of healthy weight
- Diet – too much food, nutrition (too much fat, calories, sugar; too little protein, fiber, fruits and vegetables), portion size
- Physical Activity (or lack thereof)
- Psychological – low self-esteem, distorted self-image, food as comfort or punishment, appetite, eating disorders
- Knowledge – unable to identify obesity as a problem, unable to control food cues
- Social – advertising, peer pressure, acceptance of “the fattening of society”

What are the benefits of Fit!?

Fit! is a first-rate substitute to sugar-rich candy and other fattening, unhealthy foods that so often appeal to adolescents. It also contains 24 essential vitamins and minerals and is low fat. Fit! has up to 35% daily value of calcium and 50% daily value of magnesium, two minerals that are important for proper bone growth and nervous system development. In addition, Fit!:

- contains a high amount of soy protein and carbohydrates.
- Packed with the nutrients, vitamins and minerals active children need
- In demand by health-conscious parents who want the best for their young adults
- Come in great tasting kid-tested flavors
- Low fat and low calorie
- Rich in Calcium and Magnesium
- High in Soy Protein, excellent source of fiber

How should my children use Fit!?

Healthy eating requires a daily routine of balanced, nutritious meals. It includes a varied diet where all the food groups are consistently represented. Restrictive eating of any kind in childhood is unhealthy, and can lead to adult obesity. A child's body needs fueling as many as six times per day.

General Nutrition - Use a Fit! Ready-to-Drink shake or a Fit! nutrition & energy bar as a snack 1 – 3 times daily or as part of a well-balanced meal.

Weight Maintenance/Weight Loss - Fit! meal replacements consist of a Ready-to-Drink shake and a nutrition & energy bar. Use as a meal replacement 1 – 2 times daily in place of regular meals like breakfast and lunch. This program must also include regular well-balanced, nutritious meals and any weight loss program must be done under the direct supervision of a qualified medical practitioner. Your practitioner will determine the appropriate caloric intake and plan for your child.

Is it safe to reduce the caloric intake of adolescents?

Fit! is designed to be a nutritional supplement to a healthy meal plan for older children, as is useful for controlling the caloric intake of children. Children and teenagers need more calories by body weight, but too many calories is just as harmful as not enough. The idea is to avoid excessive caloric intake, thus helping prevent extra calories from sitting in the body and become fat cells. They need the right combination of nourishment and exercise to give them the get-up-and-go to get through the day. They should not consume calories in excess of what they will burn off in exercise that day. Fit! by Medifast is a convenient way to stay healthy, maintain good nutrition and even manage weight.

Starting Medifast

How do I get started on Medifast?

Medifast recommends that you consult with your physician before starting a Medifast program. Decide whether you want to do a 5 and 1 plan with a meal once a day or the complete program (no food). That helps you determine how much product you will need. If you are unsure about the flavors, you might consider ordering a sample pack. Start with at least a two-week supply to that you don't run out of products.

Should I wait until the weekend or start during the week?

You can do either one, depending on what fits best for you. The first three days on Medifast are critical to your success, so plan your start-up carefully. You might look for a time when you don't anticipate any big events that involve food.

How long can I stay on the 5 and 1 or complete Medifast plan?

As long as you are doing well and making progress, you should be able to stay on Medifast for as long as it takes to reach your desired goal weight. Some programs recommend taking a break from a complete plan after 16 weeks; however, research has not shown this to be necessary. To lose a lot of weight, such as more than 100 pounds, you may need to be on the program for a long time.

Using Medifast

How should I space the packets?

Plan to take your supplements about 3 to 4 hours apart. Space the packets throughout the day rather than saving them up for evening.

How do I mix the packets?

To mix the cold shakes, put 8 to 10 oz. of water in shaker jar or blender. Add contents of Medifast packet and ice, if desired, then mix or blend until smooth.

Medifast Creamy Soups and Hot Cocoa should be mixed with hot water. Don't use boiling water as it cooks the protein too quickly and makes the product lumpy. Let mixture stand one minute to absorb liquid and improve flavor.

Can I mix them with milk or fruit juice?

No, these will add extra calories and change the total program balance. Also, fruit juices contain added carbohydrates so they will alter the critical protein ratio of the Medifast plan.

Can I add flavorings to the supplements?

For variety, you may add a few drops of flavoring extract, such as vanilla or mint or stir a packet into a cup of coffee. With the hot supplements, you may add salt, pepper, herbs and spices (garlic, onion, basil, cinnamon, etc.) to the hot supplements as desired. Ask your customer service representative about our Recipe Guide.

Can I mix the packets ahead of time?

Supplements may be mixed ahead and stored in a thermos or refrigerator for up to 12 hours. You might also consider using the Medifast Ready-to-Drink boxes, which offer a convenient way to take your supplements with you. These pre-mixed packets are shelf stable and can be stored easily. (Available only in Medifast 55)

Can I mix two packets together?

Yes, if necessary, you can mix two packets together, adding extra water to achieve the right consistency. Avoid doing this routinely; instead, keep your packets spaced a few hours apart.

What happens if I miss a packet?

If you miss a supplement, take the rest of the your packets closer together to make sure you get all the required supplements in before the end of the day. Because of the low calorie level of Medifast, skipping packets will put you below the optimal nutrient level your body needs to function. This decrease in your nutrient balance will make your body conserve energy and cause you to lose weight slower, not faster!

Do I need to drink a lot of fluids?

Drinking fluids helps your body be more efficient at eliminating the by-products of fat metabolism, keeping with more consistent weight loss.

What kinds of fluids are OK?

You may drink any liquids that are considered non-caloric. This includes hot or iced tea, coffee or decaf, diet sodas, Crystal Light, Diet Kool-Aid and instant broth or bouillon.

Should I worry about salt in bouillon?

No, it's fine to have extra salt. In fact, it might even make you feel better if you are somewhat tired or are feeling light-headed or dizzy. When you are on Medifast, your body loses water quickly, along with some of your electrolytes such as sodium. Your body will eventually get back in balance, but having extra salt, such as in bouillon, will help it do this more quickly.

Can I drink alcohol?

No, you should avoid all alcoholic beverages while you are on Medifast. Because alcohol is metabolized similar to a carbohydrate, it will decrease ketosis and slow your weight loss.

Can I have coffee or caffeinated sodas?

Yes, but limit coffee and caffeinated drinks to three per day. The low-calorie level of Medifast may increase your sensitivity to caffeine, causing anxiety, shakiness or other symptoms.

What can I put in my coffee?

If you wish, you may use low fat or skim milk or small amounts of half and half in your coffee or tea. You may also use artificial sweeteners such as Equal® if desired.

What can I do about wanting to chew?

You can munch on celery-up to three stalks per day is acceptable. Celery is a high-water vegetable with minimal carbohydrates.

Can I eat fruit?

No, fruits contain high levels of carbohydrates that affect your ketosis level and slow your weight loss.

Can I chew gum?

You may use sugar-free gum or mints but limit these to five per day. These products contain sorbitol, which can cause gastric distress as well as stimulate appetite.

Should I take vitamins?

If you are on a modified plan that requires only four Medifast packets a day, you should take a daily multivitamin.

Symptoms

Diarrhea?

During the first week or so on the program, some people experience diarrhea from the body's adjustment to the concentration of nutrients in the supplements. This will usually subside after a few days. Using too much sugar-free gum or mints can also cause diarrhea.

Gurgling stomach, cramps?

If you experience gurgling stomach, abdominal cramping, bloating or diarrhea, you may have lactose intolerance or a shortage of the enzyme that breaks down milk products. Try Lactaid pills, a non-prescription enzyme that helps your body digest milk components. Take 1 to 3 regular strength pills with each supplement to control the symptoms. You may be able to stop taking the pills after 2-3 weeks. (Lactaid is available at grocery stores or pharmacies.)

Constipation?

You will probably have bowel movements less frequently than normal because of the decreased food intake. If you have hard stools or feel constipated, try to drink more fluids and/or increase exercise. Take a sugar-free fiber supplement such as Metamucil. We recommend orange-flavored, smooth textured Metamucil. Take 1-2 tsp. dissolved in water once a day. You may use stool softener pills or laxatives if necessary.

Bad breath?

As your body metabolizes fat stores, the ketone by-products can cause a slight breath odor. You can also experience a dry mouth because of being slightly dehydrated from being on Medifast. To remedy both of these symptoms, drink a lot of water and other fluids, use breath sprays or products such as Breath Asure®, and brush your teeth, including your tongue, several times a day. You can also use sugar-free gum or mints, but limit these to five a day.

Feeling cold?

The low calorie level of Medifast causes your body to decrease its metabolism, which can make you feel cold more easily. Try drinking hot liquids or taking warm baths. Be prepared for this by keeping a sweater handy.

Skin rashes?

Some people develop a mild skin rash on their chest, neck or face during the early weeks on Medifast. Most skin rashes seem to be related to the high-protein balance of the program, and they disappear within a week or two. If a rash itches or feels uncomfortable, ask your doctor about taking an antihistamine such as Benadryl® to control the symptoms. You can also apply a cortisone cream to the rash to speed healing.

Hunger that doesn't go away?

If you continue to struggle with hunger beyond the first week or two, your stomach may be excreting more acid than needed for the small volume of food intake. This can create a "gnawing" sensation in your stomach that feels exactly like hunger. If you have a history of having an ulcer or gastritis, you can be particularly prone to this type of hunger problem.

To manage hunger that won't go away, consider taking an acid-blocker medication such as Zantac®, Tagamet® or Pepcid AC®. You will find these in drug stores or grocery stores, usually in the same location as antacids.

What if I get sick?

If you become ill such as getting a cold or the flu, you can stay on Medifast provided your symptoms aren't too severe. Taking antibiotics (if necessary) won't harm your Medifast plan but may temporarily slow your weight loss. Be sure to use sugar-free cough and cold medications so that you don't harm your ketosis.

What can I do about hair loss?

A small percent of the people who do Medifast will struggle with hair loss, especially ones who are on the program for three months or longer. To minimize this problem, taking supplements that contain extra B vitamins, extra zinc and the nutrient Biotin are all helpful for decreasing the problem. Some individuals may also choose more natural alternatives such as primrose oil and flax seed oil. Hair loss is not permanent and re-growth typically occurs within a couple months of going off Medifast.

Heartburn?

Use antacids such as Maalox® as desired. You might also take an acid-blocker medication such as Zantac® or Tagament® for a couple of weeks until you no longer experience the symptoms.

What can I take for a headache?

Aspirin, Tylenol and pain medications such as Ibuprofen may be used as necessary. Avoid long-term use as these may cause stomach distress when you are on Medifast.

Does the program affect my gallbladder?

As reported in the Johns Hopkins studies no case of gallbladder problems were noted in the large study they reviewed. Most people do fine and especially on the 5 & 1 program when fat intake is higher. People that are obese, females, over forty years of age, and have had children have a higher incidence of gallstones. If you are in this group we always recommend that you use the 5 & 1 program to increase your fat intake. On the complete program your fat intake low and may result in you gallbladder creating sludge from inactivity. The additional fat ingestion at least in theory should help the gallbladder remain more active. If you have a history of gallbladder disease or think you are having any further questions it is critical that you talk to your doctor before starting our program.

Will my seasonal allergy or asthma medications be a problem?

You can continue most allergy and asthma medications including inhalers, etc. while you are on Medifast.

Exercise

Can I exercise when I'm on a Complete or 5 and 1 Medifast program?

Yes, you can, but we suggest limiting the amount of exercise, especially in the beginning. It takes three to four weeks for the body to adapt to the Medifast plan and use the fat stores for energy. During this time, too much exercise can cause dehydration as well as decrease your weight loss and harm your muscle tissue.

What type of exercise (and how much) is recommended?

If you haven't been exercising at all, wait three to four weeks until you have adapted to the Medifast program. Then start your exercise plan very slowly. Begin with gentle walking, 10 to 20 minutes per day, and then gradually increase the amount. If you have been exercising prior to starting Medifast, cut your current plan by half during the first three weeks, then gradually build it back up.

What is the maximum amount of exercise I can do?

While you are on Medifast, limit intense exercise such as running, biking or swimming to a total of 45 minutes a day. Over exercising will actually slow your weight-loss progress.

Planning for Medifast Supplies

How do I need to plan my orders?

If you are purchasing the products directly from Medifast, be sure to allow 3 to 5 business days for shipping. We recommend that you purchase at least a two-week supply in the beginning, and then place your next order soon after you begin the program.

How much Medifast do I need?

If you are using a 5 & 1 plan that includes a daily meal, you will need five supplements a day or 35 packets per week. If you are doing a complete program, you will need five to six supplements a day or 35 - 42 packets per week.

Can I mix different brands of weight loss products?

We recommend that you stay with only one brand of products such as Medifast. Each product line is developed to maximize the nutrient levels your body requires. Mixing different product brands may cause you to be deficient in some nutrient.

What if I run out of packets?

As an emergency substitute for a packet, you can drink an 8-ounce glass of skim or low-fat milk for each supplement you will miss. Don't do this for more than one day.

If you will be away from your Medifast supplies for longer than one day, focus on eating meals that are high-protein, low carbohydrates until you can return to your program.

On the Program

Why did the scale go up?

The amount of weight you lose will fluctuate from week to week. Often the scale will be affected by things that cause you to retain fluids, such as PMS, not drinking enough water, illness, stress, too much exercise and even temperature extremes. Don't panic if the scale doesn't move for several days or even goes up. If you stay solid on your program, the scale will eventually show results.

What can I do about a plateau?

Plateaus usually occur after weight changes of at least 40 to 50 pounds. At this point, your body seems to take stock, and for a brief period, attempts to hold on to the fat stores. It's as though your body reshuffles its weight status while assessing whether it's safe to continue losing. Once it feels settled, your system will kick back in and allow your weight to drop again. If you experience a weight-loss plateau, look for other indications of progress such as wearing a smaller size of clothing.

Getting Off of Medifast

How do I go off the program?

When you are ready to stop Medifast, plan to do a gradual transition off the program rather than suddenly jumping back on food. During the transition period, your goal will be to gradually ease back into eating regular food at the same time you slowly wean off the Medifast packets. Doing a careful transition protects you from experiencing a "rebound" weight gain from suddenly increasing your calorie intake. It also gives your digestive system a chance to adapt to handling regular food again.

If you have the option, stretch your transition over a period of three to six weeks so your body can gradually adapt to the changes. Keep in mind that meal replacement is a philosophy that can be incorporated into your life for good. We recommend using Medifast Take Shape once or twice per day for weight maintenance.

Will I gain all the weight back?

You will maintain your success by making long-term changes in your lifestyle such as healthy eating and consistent exercise. You may also need to work on how you cope with life so that you don't reach for food when you are experiencing stress, depression or other emotional needs.



Can I go back on the program if I gain back some weight?

Absolutely. If you gain back more than 5 to 10 pounds, we recommend that you immediately return to the program for a brief period. This will help your body adjust to staying at a lower weight and prevent you from regaining what you worked so hard to lose.

Can I use Medifast products as part of a food plan?

Yes, you can. In fact, many people will use one or two Medifast supplements a day as part of their maintenance plan. This provides structure while allowing flexibility in your meal plan. Medifast suggests using the Take Shape product for weight maintenance.

The Medifast Take Shape products are higher in calories and provide everything your body needs to maintain your weight and keep it off for life. Incorporating this product into your diet once or twice a day will keep you disciplined. You may also use a Medifast packet as a protein source in your meal, adding other foods such as fruits, vegetables or a salad to maintain a healthy nutritional balance.