

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

About the OPTIFAST® Program Diet

1. Is it true I can't eat while I am on the OPTIFAST Program?

The typical OPTIFAST Program dietary protocol doesn't include conventional food. A key component of the program is a specially formulated full meal replacement diet (generally 800–1280 calories/day), followed by a gradual transition to regular foods at the completion of the active weight loss phase. The OPTIFAST products used in the diet provide high quality protein and 100% of the Daily Value for 24 vitamins and minerals in the recommended number of servings.

2. I read that as soon as you start eating regular foods all your weight comes back. Is this true?

While patients transition from their OPTIFAST Program diet to conventional foods, they generally continue to lose weight but at a slower rate. Some people may experience a slight transient weight regain during this time. In those people who do gain some weight, the amount is typically 2 pounds and tends to occur near the end of the transition phase when carbohydrates are added back into the diet.¹ This small weight regain is due to two factors: 1) The weight of the solid food that is now present in the intestine, as well as 2) the weight of water retained as a natural response to the increased carbohydrate and sodium intake.²

3. Will strict dieting ruin my metabolism?

Research by Wadden et. al.³ demonstrates that dieting does decrease resting metabolic rate (RMR). The stricter the diet, the more it depressed RMR. This is the body's natural response to a food shortage.

The study went on to find that RMR increases as calorie intake increases; at six months after OPTIFAST Program participation, there was no difference in the RMR of people who lost weight using the 420 calorie/day OPTIFAST diet* and those who lost weight using a 1200 calorie/day reduced-calorie diet of conventional foods.

People who lose a significant amount of weight will have a slightly lower RMR than they did before dieting because they will lose some lean body tissue. It is important to recognize that as people gain weight they gain lean body tissue to help carry the extra pounds. When they lose fat they lose some of the associated lean tissue.

To help ease the transition to regular foods, the OPTIFAST Program includes a **gradual** return to higher calorie levels, which helps give the dieter's metabolism time to increase. Regular exercise can also help maintain and increase a person's RMR.

*The standard OPTIFAST diet now provides a minimum of 800 calories/day.

4. Can I lose weight and keep it off if I don't exercise?

It is possible to lose weight and keep it off without exercise, but it is very rare. According to the National Weight Control Registry data, people who don't begin an exercise program when they try to lose weight and/or stop exercising after losing weight, almost always regain whatever weight they took off.⁴ The NWCR has identified that successful long-term weight loss maintainers report high levels of regular physical activity.⁵

References

1. OPTIFAST Program Medical Guide. Minneapolis, MN: Nestlé HealthCare Nutrition; 2008.
2. National Research Council. Recommended Dietary Allowances. 10th ed. Washington, DC: National Academy Press; 1989.
3. Wadden TA, Foster GD, Letizia KA, Mullen JL. Long-term effects of dieting on resting metabolic rate in obese outpatients. *JAMA*. 1990;264:707-711.
4. Wing RR, Hill JO. Successful weight loss maintenance. *Annu Rev Nutr*. 2001;21:323-341.
5. Wing RR, Phelan S. Long-term weight loss maintenance. *Am J Clin Nutr*. 2005;82(1):222S-225S.

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