Dietitians of Canada
Les diététistes du Canada

PEN The Global Resource for Nutrition Practice

Food and Symptom Journal

Writing down what you eat and how you feel can help you learn which foods or drinks are bothering you.

Share your journal with a registered dietitian or doctor. They can help you identify patterns in your symptoms and plan a healthy diet that is right for you.

Steps you can take

Use your journal to record everything you eat and drink along with your symptoms for one week (or longer). Make copies of the Food and Symptom Journal (see page three of this handout) and record each day on a separate page.

Each day, record the following details:

- all the foods you eat, including condiments, dressings, dips and spreads
    - include brand names (e.g. Kellogg's Bran Flakes® cereal)
    - describe cooking methods, such as fried, baked, or grilled
- all drinks, including items added to any drinks like cream or sugar
- any alcoholic beverages
- the amount of foods and drinks
- the time of day that you eat or drink
- any symptoms you have, how much they bother you, and the time of day you have them.

Use common household measurements to describe amounts of foods and drinks (e.g. 250ml (1 cup), 5 ml (1 teaspoon) etc.). Or, you can use the shape of your hand or common objects to estimate portion size. For example:

- one fist of tossed green salad
- one thumb tip of salted butter
- half a golf ball of natural peanut butter

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- two tennis balls of white rice

Write down what you eat and drink, and how much, as soon as possible. It can be hard to remember everything you ate and drank, the time, and the amount at the end of the day. Describe what you eat and how you feel as best as you can.

Also write down any changes you make to your usual diet and if your symptoms got better or worse, or stayed the same.

Read and think about your journal before seeing your doctor or dietitian. Write down any patterns you see and any questions you have.

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Food and Symptom Journal
DATE: _____

Time	Food and/or Drink	Amount	Symptoms and Severity (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is mild and 5 is severe)	Time Symptoms Started and Stopped	Notes (e.g. bowel movements, emotional stressors, sleep and nap times etc.)

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Notes

Additional Notes From Your Health Care Professional

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