

AH Frequently Asked Questions

Welcome to the FAQ PDF for the *Always Hungry? Solution*. We've grouped the questions by category to make it easier for you to find answers to the most common questions the AH community asks. If you don't find an answer here, join our [Facebook Community](#) where moderators and other group members are there to help, inspire, and encourage.

FAQ answers provided by Chef Dawn Ludwig.

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Specific Foods

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Lifestyle

I'm really busy! How can I simplify the cooking?

We included a wide variety of recipes in our book to accommodate a wide range of tastes, but that doesn't mean you need to make every recipe right away. We suggest repeating the meals that appeal to you most, and adding new ones as you find the bandwidth for exploration. Here are some other tips for simple meals:

- Use the Simplified Meal plan. See Resources. Meals are shown in 3-day blocks; each block uses one key protein source that repeats for each meal. Cook the key ingredient and quickly prepare fresh meals each day. Simplified Meal plans are designed for one person, but can be expanded to feed a family. They also include variations for all phases so that you can use them throughout the program.
- Cook a full recipe and use leftovers. Enjoy the recipe for a few days or freeze portions for later.
- Substitute the breakfasts that are the quickest for you to make. These measures could also allow you to extend the 3-week menu plans into many additional weeks.
- Super busy? See the following:
 - How to create meals for each phase, pp 151-152 and 183-185.
 - Restaurant and Grab-and-Go Recommendations, pp 186-188.
 - How to create a "Lettuce Wrap" to replace sandwiches, p 153.
 - Check out our online resources...
 - [Simplified Meal Plans](#)
 - [Restaurant Take-Out Guide](#)
 - [AH Snack Guide](#)
- Modify meal prep once you understand the basic principles. In the Ludwig house, if we have several sauces on hand, and a few portions of casseroles frozen, it is easier for the family to eat well. It may take a bit of a shift for some of these things (like eliminating bread-based sandwiches), but once you get the hang of things, you might be surprised how much enjoyment comes from making food at home.
- Do the prep. The key to long-term success is always the prep. We developed the menus using quick, easy sauces that are all made on prep day, so delicious, high-quality dinners can be made during the week in about 30 minutes or less—and breakfast or lunch in 15 minutes or less. The pilot participants found that during the first couple of weeks, it sometimes took a bit longer as they got used to the recipes and cooking methods—but after those first weeks, the new practices became second nature and much easier. On top of that, the pilot testers soon found that they also had the energy to do more of the things they loved (including preparing fresh food!) because they felt so much better.

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- For more time-saving shortcuts, see page 157 in the *Always Hungry?* Book.
- [Check out our online meal planning classes for more information about quick-and-easy cooking.](#)

I'm an athlete. How do I adjust the diet?

Many athletes believe that “carbo loading” is necessary for optimal physical performance. While much debate among athletic experts continues on this topic, the actual human requirement for carbohydrate is . . . zero! Even people eating few carbohydrates can store only enough for about an hour of intense activity. After that, fuel requirements come primarily from body fat. Indeed, some elite athletes have run ultra-marathons on ultra high-fat diets containing virtually no carbohydrates at all. (Note that the *Always Hungry?* Solution contains carbohydrates on all phases, though the amount is substantially reduced for the 2 weeks of Phase 1).

The meal plan is designed to redirect calories away from fat cells to the rest of the body – which is good for long-term weight loss and great for physical performance. The diet also has plenty of protein to build and maintain lean body mass.

Of course, with high levels of physical activity, you'll need to eat more to replace the calories burned. Just let your hunger be your guide to total food intake. For individuals engaged in the highest levels of physical activity, with energy needs above 3000 kcal/day, consider reducing protein intake below the recommended 25% in Phases 1 and 2, to avoid overload. Replace any reduction in protein with fat.

For any specific questions about adapting the program to your specific situation, please consult with your medical provider, a nutrition expert, or an exercise physiologist.

I'm just one person. Can I adjust the cooking?

Yes! Start with the [Simplified Meal Plans Page](#) on our website. These meal plans are made for one person but can be expanded to feed a family. You can also follow the main menu plan, but extend the leftovers for a few days.

[Check out our Quick and Easy Part 2: Using Leftovers and Cooking for One Class.](#)

We're on a budget. How do we adjust the plan?

We built the meal plans to appeal to a wide variety of tastes, food preferences, time constraints, and budgets. Find the foods, meals, and ingredients that work best for you and use those in place of the more expensive options. For example, choose another favorite breakfast in place of smoked salmon. Here are some ideas to guide you:

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- Prioritize your spending: Focus first on high quality oils and fats, choosing good quality extra-virgin olive oil and a quality neutral oil. Many big box stores (such as Costco and Walmart) and grocery stores now offer high quality store brands at a reasonable cost. For example, avocado oil is sold in a large, less expensive bottle at Costco.
- Choose vegetables and fruits that are in season and/or on sale, and then choose recipes that feature those ingredients, or substitute those fruits/vegetables in for recipes that you like. Look at the Variation sections of recipes to give you some ideas.
- Make a double batch of entrees and freeze leftovers to help save cooking time, reduce food waste, and allow you to capitalize on those sales as well.
- Choose less expensive cuts of meat like drumsticks in place of chicken thighs. They work just as well.
- Cut the quantity of meat-based meals and choose to eat eggs or vegetable-based proteins such as beans or tofu.
- Make your own beans in a slow cooker or pressure cooker rather than buying them in cans
- See the “*I’m really busy!*” question or the **Food Substitutions** section for other tips on how to substitute foods and adapt it to your lifestyle.

And Remember, you will be saving money elsewhere by eating out less, not buying packaged snacks and foods, and staying healthier!

I’m a vegan/vegetarian/pescatarian. Can this plan be adapted for me?

Yes, with a few adjustments and substitutions, the program can be adapted for vegans, vegetarians, or pescatarians. We hope that the *Always Hungry?* Solution will help you find not just a diet, but a way of eating that supports you, no matter what your dietary preferences.

As a Natural Foods Chef, I have trained clients and professional chefs in vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free, macrobiotic, pescatarian, and raw diets for more than 20 years. I made sure to provide vegetarian variations for almost all of the recipes in the book.

For more guidance, see our [Vegetarian Meal Planning Classes](#). Our [Vegetarian Basics Class](#) has a complete vegetarian one-week meal plan included.

See the Substitute table on page 154 of *Always Hungry?* for guidance regarding meat and dairy substitutions, in places where the meal plan may not be explicit.

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See the Equivalents Chart on page 49 of *Always Delicious* to see a chart of ingredients that have the same ratios (and therefore, can be substituted with each other in any meal).

For more recipes and ideas follow Dawn on Facebook at [/chefdawnludwig](#) or on our [Pinterest page](#). We also have a very active group of vegetarians on our free [Facebook Community](#).

I'm travelling. Can I follow the Always Hungry? Solution plan then?

Yes, you can absolutely make it work on the road. The book features several tables to help you make good choices when you are not able to prepare your own meals at home:

1. Familiarize yourself with "Program Foods Phase-by-Phase," p 110-117.
2. Building a Phase 1 Meal, pp 151-152 (maybe even make a copy of that chart to keep with you).
3. Building a Phase 2 Meal, pp 183-185.
4. Make Your Own Snack, pp 185-186, OR view the [AH Snack Guide on our website](#).
5. [Restaurant Grab-and-Go Recommendation](#), pp 186-188, OR view the Restaurant Take-out Guide on our website.

These should keep you on the right track until you are back in your own kitchen.

Weight Loss

I only need to lose ten pounds. Will this work?

The wonderful thing about having a diet that doesn't rely on calorie counting is that it can work for anyone, no matter how much you weigh or how much you would like to lose. Ultimately, the program is designed to retrain your fat cells and conquer your cravings no matter how much you weigh:

- Using natural, slowly digesting foods in the correct ratios allows the fat cells to open up and release excess, pent-up calories for use by the rest of the body.
- The *Always Hungry?* Solution can also provide benefits to people at a normal weight because it calms chronic inflammation – a key risk factor for diabetes and heart disease.

Use the trackers to pay attention to how your body is responding (printable trackers available on the “Resources” tab on our website). Once you become more mindful of how this new way of eating makes you feel, you can fine-tune for optimal energy and satisfaction, adding foods back in and adjusting portion sizes as your body needs.

For online trackers, check out our [Always Hungry? Accountability \(AHA\) Platform](#). Here, you can track your own progress or hire a coach to help guide you along your journey.

What if I need to lose a lot? Like 100 lbs or more. Will this work long term?

The reason diets fail is HUNGER. On the pilot program, we worked with a wide range of people (about 250 in total) with a variety of weight loss goals, including those who wanted to lose 50 to 100 pounds or more. Most of them had tried many diets and been yo-yoing for years. Our goal with this book was to teach people a *sustainable* approach that would make the process pleasurable and the weight loss permanent, rather than a *sensational* approach that promises big losses but leads you to yo-yo again and again. What's the point of losing 50 pounds in 3 months on a low calorie diet, only to feel starved and then struggle to keep the weight off after? By contrast, losing that weight while enjoying your food and feeling great is true success.

The pilot participants consistently began to see this as a health plan, not just a diet. Here are some approaches that others have used:

- First, watch how you feel, pay attention to your body, and adjust your portions and meal timing as your body guides you. Some days you might skip snacks other days

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you might need more than is suggested. Even if you eat a smaller amount, don't skip meals though. Use the Trackers (download at www.DrDavidLudwig.com).

- Feel free to stay in Phase 1 as long as feels comfortable to you or move more slowly into Phase 2 by gradually incorporating those meals. Some people who had more weight to lose found that they really enjoyed the discipline of Phase 1.
- Once you shift into Phase 2, stay there until you reach your target weight. Again, you could stay in Phase 2 forever, if it feels right. Phase 1 meals still work in Phase 2 as well. You don't have to include grains or starchy vegetables in every Phase 2 meal.
- If your weight has leveled off and you're ready to experiment with some of the more processed carbs again, you can shift into Phase 3 making adjustments to create a personalized program that is right for you. As always, let the Trackers guide you.
- You could shift back to Phase 1 and move slowly into Phase 2 or Phase 3—it's truly up to you and what works best for your body. Once your body adapts and your fat cells are "retrained," you'll be able to handle these shifts – and feel how they affect you – more easily.

The *Always Hungry?* Solution is about getting to know YOUR body, so only you will know when the time is right to move between phases. You are more than a number on a scale. This is about nourishing your body well, not just losing weight.

For online trackers to help you track your progress, check out our [Always Hungry? Accountability \(AHA\) Platform](#). Here, you can track your own progress or hire a coach to help guide you along your journey.

For a complete 3-month program to get you started, check out our [JumpStart Your Metabolic Health Program](#).

What if I'm not losing much weight yet?

For the first few weeks of the program, please don't focus on the scale. The goal in Phase 1 is to calm down fat cells and take the body out of starvation mode. If you feel less hunger and fewer cravings, that's actually a great first step. Other early signs you're headed in the right direction include greater enjoyment of food, increased energy, more stable mood and improved sense of wellbeing. Also during Phase 1, pay attention to how your clothes are fitting – waist size is actually a much better indicator of body fatness than weight. Crash diets might take off weight fast, but much of it comes from water and lean body mass. And what's the use, if you're starved and must struggle to maintain the weight loss?

The *Always Hungry?* Solution takes the opposite approach to conventional dieting. We aim to address weight gain at its source – fat cells stuck in calorie storage overdrive. This way, weight loss may be slower, but without hunger and deprivation, it's progressive and sustainable. Focus

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on giving your body the right foods and other supports – enough sleep, stress reduction and enjoyable physical activities. Then let your body, not a diet book author, determine what rate of weight loss is right for you. If after a month or two, you're still concerned that your weight isn't moving in the right direction, please see the section on problem solving (pp 200-202).

Will certain foods keep me from losing weight?

There may be foods that are “trigger foods” for you or that your body tolerates less well. Some bodies handle dairy better than others, same for chocolate, or grains, or starchy vegetables. Don't be afraid to experiment with foods to see how you tolerate them. Eliminating or adding a certain food might be the answer to a plateau you've reached.

Ease in slowly or try eliminating one food or another or adding a grain or starchy veg with one meal and see how your body does. Different foods will affect people differently. So maybe try a different one each week or every few days. Remember to use your Trackers. The ultimate goal is to learn to listen to what your body needs (and to be gentle on yourself in the process).

What if I'm losing inches but not much weight?

Consider two hypothetical people on a diet who each decreased their waist size by 4 inches. One lost a total of 20 pounds and the other lost only 10 pounds. All things being equal, which one would have benefited the most? Although both individuals experienced a similar decrease in fat mass (based on change in waist circumference), the one who lost less weight would have preserved more muscle—a definite advantage for appearance, health, and likelihood of successful weight loss maintenance.

The bottom line is FIRST focus on how you feel; SECOND notice your waist; and THIRD weight will take care of itself over time. This way, we don't force the body to lose weight (which isn't sustainable). Instead, we give the body what it wants, and let it determine the rate of weight loss that's right for you.

Remember, the ultimate purpose of the *Always Hungry?* Solution is to reverse the metabolic problems caused by a poor diet, creating the internal conditions for optimal health. Weight loss is a happy side effect for those who need it!

What do I do if I reach a plateau that I can't seem to overcome?

First, look at any new foods that you are eating or foods that you are consuming in larger quantities, and do elimination experiments to see if they affect your results. Some of these might be “trigger foods” for you that are throwing you off or that you tend to eat more from emotional/habitual hunger. For example, for some people it is chocolate or nuts or dairy. Find out what it is for you.

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Second, I would play with portion sizes. Remember, this is not about restriction; it is about learning what your body needs. See “portion sizes” question.

Third, keep experimenting. See “Should I stay in Phase 1” Question, and keep working to find out what your body needs, and most importantly “nourish” it to health. Remember that when you work with your body, it will be easier to sustain the weight loss on a long-term basis.

Finally, eating regular meals at regular times can put your body in sync in remarkable ways. Try it and see if your body has an easier time trusting the nourishment and begins to let go more easily.

Food Substitutions & Personalizing

Can I substitute or swap meals?

Yes, you can substitute meals within any phase however you like! For Phase 2:

- You can swap in meals from Phase 1 for any day; just use a touch less fat and/or a bit more of the high-quality carbs. You certainly don't have to have grains or starchy vegetables with every Phase 2 meal.
- You can intersperse meals from Phase 3 into your Phase 2 routine for the occasional treat and flexibility. Just keep tracking and listening to how your body does with cravings, energy level, and hunger before (and satisfaction after) the meals. Ultimately, this program is about learning to listen to YOUR body and adjusting to what you need, from portion sizes to carb quality.

Feel free to experiment, and don't forget to use the Trackers—together with the instructions in the book and on the website.

For more meal planning and recipe ideas, check out our [meal planning classes](#) and [one-on-one sessions with Chef Kenzie Osborne](#).

What if I don't like (or can't eat) some of the foods?

Feel free to substitute those ingredients (or swap out those meals) for others that are more appealing to you. For example, if you don't like smoked salmon or it's beyond your food budget, swap those breakfasts for any others that you like. If you don't handle soy well, use eggs in the Black Bean Tofu Scramble. If chicken thighs are too expensive, buy drumsticks instead. If someone in the family is sensitive to or prefers not to eat a certain type of protein, use another protein instead, just make sure to sub fatty protein for fatty protein, and the same for lean protein (see Making a Phase 1 Meal page 152 or Phase 2 Meal page 184 for guidance). Empowering you to put together your own meals is the ultimate goal of the program. Also, see page 154 for other meat and dairy substitutions.

If you'd like one-on-one meal planning support, check out our [one-on-one meal planning sessions with Chef Kenzie Osborne](#).

Can I make this work if I don't cook the recipes and follow the meal plans exactly?

Empowering you to put together your own meals is the ultimate goal of the program. The book features several tools to help you build your own recipes at home:

1. [Program Foods Phase-by-Phase pp 110-117.](#)
2. [Building a Phase 1 Meal, pp 151-152 .](#)
3. [Building a Phase 2 Meal, pp 183-185.](#)
4. Tips for Phase 2 Success, pp 188-190.
5. [Make Your Own Snack, pp 185-186.](#)
6. [Restaurant Grab-and-Go Recommendations, pp 186-188.](#)
7. Phase 3 Tools, pp 208-214.

A general rule is to create your meal around a 4-6 oz serving of protein, adding lots of non-starchy veggies, a good quality source of fat (more or less depending on the fat content of your protein), and natural carbs from beans, fruit, and (depending on program phase) starchy vegetables or whole kernel grains.

For more meal planning and recipe ideas, check out our [meal planning classes](#) and [one-on-one sessions with Chef Kenzie Osborne](#).

Can I do the Always Hungry? Solution without dairy?

Yes, it is perfectly okay to follow the plan without the dairy! We have included a table for vegetarian and dairy-free substitutions on page 154 for guidance. Many of the recipes also offer dairy-free options in the "Variations" sections below the recipes. For example, you could use coconut milk in place of heavy cream for the Phase 1 Power Shake or for the berries with cream desserts.

For more dairy-free meal planning ideas, see our [Dairy-Free Meal Planning Classes](#).

Should I stay in Phase 1? How do I know when to move to Phase 2?

Yes, you can stay in Phase 1 for a while if needed. However, don't be afraid to experiment with different grains to see how you tolerate them. You don't have to go all the way into Phase 2 either. If you want to ease in slowly when you are ready, just try adding a grain or starchy veg with one meal and see how your body does. Different grains may affect you differently as well.

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So maybe try a different one each week or every few days. Any Phase 1 meal can be incorporated into Phase 2. Phase 2 is about increasing flexibility. You can choose to reduce fat a bit or add new types of carbs or not. Freedom!!!!

How can I tell the difference between biological, emotional, and habitual eating?

One of the most satisfying parts of this program for me is watching readers start sorting out what is biological hunger, what is habitual eating, and what is emotional hunger. Once you're ready, and your biology is working for you instead of against you, you can start to ask yourself some simple questions.

For example:

- Am I actually hungry or is it something else? Am I Upset? Bored? Scared? Hiding? Procrastinating?
- Are there activities that trigger my habitual or emotional hunger?
- What are my trigger moods?
- Are there people in my life who trigger my "hunger"?
- How have my sleep and stress-levels been lately?

Of course, you will also just have "hungry" days. When that happens, be gentle on yourself and just eat a bit more. Remember, tomorrow you might not be so hungry and your body can handle the little extra for a day or so. It might even calm your biological responses down a bit. Keep paying attention to the activities (or lack of activities) that trigger you. Keep asking questions, reaching out for support, changing environments and habits to support your goals. This is what helps us sort this out for long-term success. Learning what YOUR body needs is the most essential lesson of the AH program.

Family

Will my family really eat this stuff?

You might be surprised! We tested these meals with many families, including lots of kids (and reluctant spouses). Some of the pilot program participants started out doing the program on their own, while their families continued to eat as they normally did. Soon though, spouses began to join in, and then kids started to smell and see the food Mom and Dad were eating, and they tried some, too. They didn't necessarily know that the Marinara Primavera had tempeh, or the Eggplant Parmesan had tofu, or that the Shepherd's Pie didn't have any potatoes – they just loved it! One mom reported having to hide her food so her kids wouldn't eat it before she got home!

In our work with families over the years, we've found that when parents don't make a big deal out of dietary changes, their families will usually eat whatever's put on the table. Dr. Ludwig has done extensive work with picky eaters in his clinic. Read this article to learn about when Dr. Ludwig teamed up with Sally Sampson of *Chop Chop* magazine to take on some picky eaters, or check out Dr Ludwig's first book about enhancing family nutrition, *Ending the Food Fight*, for more suggestions.

[See our "Quick and Easy Cooking for the Family" class for more support.](#)

Can I do this at home with a family that doesn't participate or is not supportive?

The short answer is YES!!

The best thing any of us can do to influence those around us is to be role models ourselves (put our mask on first) and love others for exactly where they are in the moment. Compassion is the elixir of life. Just keep remembering rule number one: "be gentle on yourself and others." I have been guiding clients to change their health with food for 20 years, and this has always stayed my number one rule. When others see the changes that happen (on the scale, but more importantly the NSVs -non scale victories) they want some of what we've got. Keep coming back to this group and find your support here. Your family will walk their path and find their way. And if you ever just need a boost or reminder, reach out to the AH Community. There's always someone here to help.

I had so many pilot participants in this same boat (family at home that was ambivalent at best and downright hostile about "another diet" at worst). Still, I would see wonderful little updates come in that said, "my spouse/son/daughter/in-law tried this recipe and loved it," or "My husband has declared that I can no longer refer to this as a diet because there is NO deprivation here," and my favorite "I've had to start hiding my AH prepped meals from my kids because lately, it is all gone by the time I get home."

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Remember AH rule number one “Be Gentle on Yourself and Others” and give your family time to smell the aromas, taste the things they feel drawn to, and maybe even enjoy some kitchen and dinner times with you!! As you are a role model, they will want some of what you’ve got.

How do I work with my overweight child on this program?

Eating AH food is absolutely appropriate for children. And the interactions you have with them around food would also be well guided by the [Ending the Food Fight Book](#). If you haven’t seen it already, [The Picky Eater Project](#) is another great resource that David did with Sally Sampson of ChopChop Magazine.

Each child is different, so listening and paying attention is important. If you put another “diet” program on kids who have struggled with weight, they are bound to feel negatively about it, but cooking more and letting them help, and empowering them to have fun with you around food...that is a new step forward that can support everyone. As Dr. Ludwig says “weight loss is a happy side effect.”

Your child is so lucky to have you doing this with him! Many kids have “diets” forced on them as if it’s only THEIR problem without looking at the family dynamic or the social and environmental aspects that undermine us. One of the things I love about AH is that it takes out the shame, blame, and criticism about “willpower” and replaces it with the empowerment to love food. If your child feels you’re there with them perhaps this can be a bonding experience that will serve him for his lifetime in his relationship with food and with you. I admire you for doing this!!

Meal Planning

Is there a guideline for helping me get the ratios right?

Some readers have used apps like Myfitnesspal or Loselt to help guide them.

Note: It's good to make sure you choose a verified food or double-check your label to ensure your food has the right macronutrient values.

Remember: another big goal of the program is to help you to let go of counting anything—calories, fat or carbohydrate grams, even portion size. We have engineered the meal plan to take fat cells out of calorie storage overdrive – the underlying cause of weight gain.

As you eat this way, your hunger and cravings become more trustworthy, and you'll be able to more effectively tune into how a meal affects you, and what your body needs. For example, a craving that used to lead you to sweets might mean you need a bit more fat in a meal, or you need a good quality snack. Or it might mean that the processed carbs you ate for breakfast are throwing your body off again. As you master this intuitive eating style, you can feel liberated to let go of the calculations and just enjoy good quality meals. Use the Trackers and tables to guide you.

A general rule is to create your meal around a 4-6 oz serving of protein, adding lots of non-starchy veggies, a good quality source of fat (more or less depending on the fat content of your protein), and natural carbs from beans, fruit, and (depending on program phase) starchy vegetables or whole kernel grains.

The book also features guidelines to help you with correct ratios:

1. [Building a Phase 1 Meal, pp 151-152.](#)
2. [Building a Phase 2 Meal, pp 183-185.](#)
3. Phase 3 Tools, pp 208-214.

For more support, visit our [meal planning classes](#) page and/or book a [one-on-one meal planning session with Chef Kenzie Osborne.](#)

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How do the meal plans work? It says they are designed for two, but is described per serving. What does that mean?

The main meal plans are intended for two people, most often using leftovers to serve two the following day. The * or ** next to the recipe titles indicate whether to make a full or half recipe. Most recipes are designed to serve 2 to 4 people. Serving size is noted on each recipe.

In addition to the recipes, there are items that are served with a meal or recipe. These are described per ONE serving. For example, adding 1 cup of berries or yogurt per person or cooking 2 eggs and 1 egg white for each person.

For example, a full 4-serving recipe of Herb Roasted Chicken Thighs on Day 1 would serve a dinner for two, giving each person a serving of chicken. With that, add a cup of kale and 1 Tbsp sauce listed on the menu plan for each person, and dessert of 1 cup of fruit with 1/2 oz chocolate per person. You would use the remaining two servings of Herb Roasted Chicken to make the Chicken Salad with Grapes and Walnuts for Day 2 lunch.

Give it a try. After a few days, most people find the meal plan straightforward and easy to follow.

[See our simplified meal plans for 3-day plans that are simple to prepare.](#)

How do I know what portion size to serve?

The portion sizes in the book can be huge for some people. Please stop when satisfied. In trying to provide for an average person we had to choose a starting point and were quite generous with our portions to show people that you can (and should) eat if you are hungry. However, many find the portion sizes large, and some people might need more. That's where the Trackers come in.

Learning what your body needs is the ultimate goal here. You want to eat enough that you are reasonably hungry for the next meal but not ravenously hungry. Some days you might skip the snacks. Some days you might want extra snacks.

You can even play with how much your body needs. We have been so “programmed” by huge portion sizes in our culture that it can be hard to know what we actually need. If you go light on a certain meal, just eat a snack later. What you need will also change from day to day as your body is re-trained. Listening is the key. This can be an empowering and liberating process. Welcome to the journey!!!!

For online trackers, check out our [Always Hungry? Accountability \(AHA\) Platform](#). Here, you can track your own progress or hire a coach to help guide you along your journey.

Specific Foods

What about pork?

We chose not to add pork bacon to the meal plans because the fat content was too high to fit with the meals that accompany it. We'd rather use turkey bacon or Canadian bacon (leaner pork) and add more whipped cream to the waffles, for example. The Melt-in-Your Mouth Lamb Shanks give pork shanks as a variation in the book. So use it all you want, just make sure to substitute like for like, for example: sub fatty meat for fatty meat and lean for lean, or move the fat to or from some other part of the meal to accommodate the differing fat contents.

I'll really miss sugar - what about stevia or other low-carb or artificial sweeteners?

While the research is still unclear whether stevia creates an insulin response in the body or affects fat cells directly, I still recommend staying away from all of these sweeteners if you can, especially during Phase 1 (and even Phase 2, if possible). In addition to retraining your fat cells, the *Always Hungry?* Solution can also retrain your tastebuds. But because these sweeteners are so sweet, they can delay this process, inhibiting the body's ability to truly appreciate the more subtle flavors of things like berries or fruit as sweet. With retrained taste buds, many find it easier to manage cravings, as instinctive food preferences change for the better.

While total abstinence from sweeteners will likely result in the fastest changes, more gradual reduction might work better some people. If you're used to a lot of sugar in your coffee/tea, it's ok to reduce it gradually over several days. Try adding some heavy cream or half and half instead, to increase the satisfaction level. You'll likely find you require less sweetness because the body registers calorie density as very satisfying. This shift might seem subtle to you, but it makes all the difference in the world to your fat cells.

And in the end, if you need a little sweetener boost, you can always add it back in for Phase 3, or perhaps even Phase 2. By then, though, you'll probably find that you don't need it anymore!

Can I use my low-fat favorites like chicken breasts or low-fat dairy? I just like them better.

I experienced this interesting phenomenon in the pilot program. It took a while for some of the pilot participants to shift to using the full fat choices. Many of them felt skeptical and even guilty for doing so to the point where their tastebuds even rejected the idea. In the interim, I had them try to move up slowly to full fat dairy or fattier meats and encouraged them to keep going back to the full fat versions of things to try them from time to time.

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Fattier cuts of meat (thighs and drumsticks) and full fat dairy are actually healthier choices (based on extensive research that negates the low fat craze of the past 40 years – see notations for many such studies). However, our tastebuds have changed based on what we have been “taught” is healthy. In primitive societies or even when animals feast, they throw out the lean cuts as they don’t provide as much quality and efficient energy as the fattier parts.

You might find that as your body relaxes into being fully nourished with higher fat foods and your “belief systems” about high fat foods change, your tastebuds might actually shift too. If not, then adding something higher fat into a meal with a lean meat like chicken breast will always work to even out the macronutrients.

What kinds of potatoes are included in “white” potatoes?

“White” potatoes include all forms of starchy potato except sweet potatoes and yams. So, red-, purple-, blue-, fingerling-, new-potatoes and other starchy potatoes are included on the avoid list.

What about the occasional birthday cake, cookie, or carb-heavy meal? How do I make up for that?

Life happens – and we encourage you to adapt the program to your needs at any time.

That said, we recommend following Phases 1 as closely as possible to change metabolism most effectively and jump-start weight loss – including no added sugar or processed carbohydrates (other than the small amount in real dark chocolate). Phase 2 allows for a touch more added sugar, but probably not enough for a birthday splurge. Then in Phase 3, you can add the more processed carbohydrates on a more regular basis, according to your body’s ability to handle them (as guided by the Trackers).

Many pilot participants found that after following the program for a while, they actually could eat ONE cookie without losing control. This shocked some who had never been able to eat sweets in moderation before. Others found that once their taste buds changed, the sweets they used to love were too sweet, and no longer satisfying.

Our advice: Consider birthdays and other such events as learning opportunities. Use your Trackers to help you notice how you feel before and after eating some cake. How does it affect your hunger, cravings, energy level, etc., later? This awareness of your body will guide you well. Gradually, or sometimes all of the sudden, the siren call of sugar becomes way less alluring.

What are the differences among protein powders?

All protein powders are, by definition, processed. They are not a “whole food” as emphasized in the *Always Hungry?* meal plan. However, we use a moderate amount of protein powder for our breakfast shakes because some people want a quick, drinkable option first – especially for those busy mornings. And with the right combination of nutrients, we believe the Phase 1 Power Shake and the Peanut Butter Banana Power Shake will be healthier (not to mention tastier!) than conventional alternatives.

In choosing a protein powder, keep in mind that there are significant differences in source, degree of processing, taste, ingredients and price. If you prefer to avoid using protein powder entirely, no problem – simply replace the breakfast shakes with any other breakfast on the same meal plan phase.

The main types of protein powders are:

- WHEY – made from one of the two main milk proteins. *Concentrate* – Least processed; may contain lactose; non-heat treated products may have bioactive substances with beneficial health effects. We prefer products made from organic (and ideally pasture-raised) animals. *Isolate* – more processed, with some denaturation of protein molecules. *Hydrolysate* – most processed; protein has been broken down into small peptides.
- CASEIN – made from the other main milk protein (the “curds” in curds and whey). Digests more slowly than whey.
- COLLAGEN and GELATIN– the main protein in animal connective tissues like skin and joints. Considered one of the beneficial components in “bone broth.” May have anti-inflammatory properties.
- EGG WHITE – considered the protein with highest “bioavailability.”
- SOY – an inexpensive vegetarian alternative. Some people have concerns about the phytoestrogens, lecithin and lectins (carbohydrate-binding proteins) present in soy products.
- PEA – another option for vegetarians
- HEMP – a third vegetarian option.

For more information, see Prevention.com and Livestrong.com

Which fats and oils do you recommend for cooking and sauces?

When eating a diet that is 40-50% fat, it is essential to choose high quality fats from a variety of sources. In the AH Program, we include recipes with many different fats to encourage a healthy balance in the body. While some people do well with animal fats and can use them often, others

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may need to focus more on the plant-based fats. Use your trackers and pay attention to how your body tolerates different fats. You can also see p. 121 of the *Always Hungry?* Book for details on which blood tests you should have checked for longer term results.

Nuts and seeds, avocados, coconut, butter or ghee, olives, and less processed cooking oils that are high in monounsaturated fats (such as olive oil or avocado oil), are the preferred sources of fat on the AH Program. If you choose seed oils for cooking, choose the high-oleic versions of oils like safflower or sunflower oil. These high-oleic seed oils and Avocado oil stand up well to high heat and even deep-frying. Canola oil can also be used, but is higher in polyunsaturated fats than other oils we recommend on a regular basis, and I find that the quality is quite variable among brands.

Which kinds of flour can I use in each Phase and are they interchangeable?

Non-grain based flour products are recommended for all phases of the AH book. Once you have hit your goals and moved into Stage 3, we recommend using grain-based flours only as your body tolerates them. When used properly, non-grain flours can reconnect you with your favorite recipes, making them delicious and health supportive!

The tricky part about using nut flours, bean flours or coconut flour is that they each have unique qualities that require adjustments when substituting or interchanging them. Almond flour is higher in oil, Coconut flour holds more water, and each has a distinct texture. Unless you have really used each type and understand how to work with them, it is best to find and use recipes that call for that particular flour.

If you would like to experiment, here are some guidelines to help you along the way:

CHICKPEA FLOUR (Besan flour)—Chickpea flour is a versatile, gluten-free flour that works well in many recipes. It creates a texture that more closely resembles wheat flour or grain-based gluten-free flours. Because it is gluten-free, the dough needs to be fairly thick in order to create a structure that will rise. Adding eggs or ground flaxseeds, Greek Yogurt, vegetable purees like sweet potatoes or winter squash or other ingredients to thicken the batter will help create the structure needed. Depending on the recipe, baking powder, baking soda, carbonated water or beaten egg whites might also be needed to create a lighter dough. Chickpea flour will require less oil than wheat flours would in a similar recipe. It also works well as a binder or filler in recipes that call for flour. Find it online or at a lower cost at your local Indian Food Market.

Here are a few types of recipes that work well with chickpea or other bean-based flours:

- Waffles or Pancakes
- Socca (Farinata) crackers, crepes, flatbread, tortillas
- Pizza Crusts

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- Batter for frying fish, chicken or vegetables
- Pie Crusts
- Gravy or thickener
- Binder in recipes like meatballs, grain patties, or vegetable fritters

ALMOND FLOUR—Almond flour is perfect for sweet recipes or as a filler or binder in recipes. It is naturally higher in fat so it will require less oil than other flours in similar recipes. The texture will be less creamy than chickpea flour but works well combined with chickpea flour to create a more neutral flavor in dessert crusts. Here are a few types of recipes that work well with almond flour.

- Cookies
- Crusts, especially when combined with Chickpea flour
- Binder in recipes like meatballs, grain patties, or vegetable fritters

COCONUT FLOUR—Its distinct flavor means that coconut flour works for recipes that go well with coconut. The texture is less smooth than other flours and can be a bit gritty at times. It also absorbs more liquid than other flours which can make it harder to use in recipes that were not specifically developed for it.

[See our “Guide to Grain Free Flours” Post for more information.](#)

Medical & Health

Can I continue my current exercise routine in Phase 1?

If you already have joyful movement incorporated into your life, then please keep it up. Just take it a bit easier during the early stages of the program, as your body transitions. In Phase 1, movement is meant to benefit your metabolism – you don't need to burn a lot of calories. Your body will be burning more calories simply with the new types and ratios of foods you're eating. Getting off sugar and refined carbs may cause you to feel tired for a few days. If you stick with the principles of the eating program through these low-energy moments, you'll be rewarded with a surge of energy soon.

What about heart disease risk factors?

The higher fat diet in the *Always Hungry?* Solution is not only good for your waist, it can be great for your heart. The PREDIMED study compared a low fat control diet to higher fat Mediterranean diets with loads of olive oil and nuts. They had to end the study early, because cardiovascular disease rates decreased so fast in the higher fat groups, the point of the study was proven. Please see pp 59-60 and 78-81 for an in-depth discussion.

Can I follow the program if I have a coexisting medical problem?

There is no special reason why people with a range of medical conditions can't also follow this way of eating. In fact, the diet was specifically designed to address insulin resistance and chronic inflammation, metabolic problems that underlie or exacerbate many chronic diseases, such as Type 2 diabetes. The *Always Hungry?* Solution provides a balanced diet, without extreme restriction of any major nutrient. As the program progresses, your diet will come to resemble many healthful traditional eating patterns, such as the classic Mediterranean diet.

That said, if you do have any special medical conditions, we strongly encourage you to speak with your medical provider before beginning the program. Examples of such medical conditions include:

- Autoimmune disease (e.g., myasthenia gravis).
- Diabetes (Type 1 or 2).
- Gall bladder disease.
- Inflammatory bowel disease (Crohn's or ulcerative colitis).
- Seizure disorder.
- Thyroid disease – uncontrolled.
- Other endocrine or metabolic problems.

How do I manage gastrointestinal symptoms?

Because the *Always Hungry?* Solution has an abundance of whole plant foods, all phases of the diet provide lots of fiber. Nevertheless, any major change in diet can cause temporary gastrointestinal issues, as the body (and the gut microbes) adapt.

- *For constipation:* Drink plenty of fluids and take a gentle walk after meals to keep things moving! Consider an over-the-counter magnesium supplement. Magnesium is an essential nutrient and natural stool softener. In addition, magnesium tends to relax muscles and nerves – we like to take it in the evening, before bed.
- *For gas, cramping or loose stools:* Cut back on the highest fiber foods for a while, especially beans. Consider a probiotic supplement if you don't eat much naturally fermented foods.

As always, please discuss any significant medical symptoms or concerns with your medical care provider.

What do you think about Intermittent Fasting?

Intermittent fasting has attracted attention lately, including in several recent diet books and an article in the New York Times. The *Always Hungry?* Program can support intermittent fasting and, in principle, enhance its benefits. Once fat cells have been “retrained” to release stored calories, the transition from fed to fasting becomes easy and doesn't precipitate the starvation response (involving extreme hunger, release of stress hormones and slowing metabolism).

For those who can tolerate it, intermittent fasting may provide significant metabolic benefits, such as improved insulin sensitivity. In addition, fasting results in the production of ketones, considered by some to be a sort of superfuel for brain and body. Of course, intermittent fasting can also save time, since you'll make fewer meals.

If you want to explore intermittent fasting on the *Always Hungry?* program, wait until Phase 2 or 3. (The purpose of Phase 1 is to take the body out of starvation mode with regular meals and snacks containing the right balance of nutrients). Try skipping breakfast, have your first meal at 1-2 pm, and have your last meal by 8pm. If you feel good all morning and don't wind up overeating later in the day, then intermittent fasting might be a reasonable option for you. Another variant is to have just fat for breakfast, as for example with Bulletproof coffee – including medium chain triglycerides to promote ketone formation. But keep in mind, people differ greatly in their ability to tolerate fasting, so it's critical to pay attention to your body's responses. For some, fasting may produce more harm than good.

Ultimately, many of the benefits of fasting can be obtained by simply reducing intake of fast-digesting carbohydrates (processed grains, potato products and added sugars).

Technical Support

How can I access the audiobook PDF?

The audiobooks come with a PDF in a separate file that has the recipes and graphics on it.

Finding the PDF has been a challenge for a few audiobook listeners. All of the audiobooks come with a PDF in a separate text document though. For iTunes downloads, the file is often found in the iTunes song library, under the “D’s” for “Digital Booklet.”

I have had a few readers who have asked about this when checking out the audiobook from their libraries and had trouble finding it at first. However, their libraries were able to direct them to access the PDFs when asked.

The PDF does come with the iTunes download that is separate from the audio file. It may be stored in another download folder on your computer (check the song library under the “D’s”) as it is sorted as a document file versus an MP4 file.

Here are the directions one user gave me for Audible “There was a menu bar across the top (in Audible) as I had the book itself “open”. I found the PDF off to the “sort of” right in that menu bar. I clicked on it, it downloaded , and I was easily able to print it all out.” and a screenshot that another user sent me is below. Another reader recently said Audible changed again and you have to open the quick look box next to the book in the setup as shown below.

If you are still unable to find the file, please send me an email to let me know.

Here are some the links for audio book support...

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What about eBooks?

The Kindle and iPad versions of the book do not come with a separate PDF, as the recipes and graphics are incorporated into the download. Use the “back” button on iPad versions or the “bookmark” function on kindle tablets to navigate between pages, and use the search function in place of an index (since ebooks do not have page numbers to provide a subject index).

Can I print out the tables from my kindle or iBooks version of Always Hungry?

Unfortunately, Kindle and iBooks versions do not yet come with any print functions. Depending on your individual device, you may have a “Print Screen” function—but we suggest checking with your device’s tech support team for more help there. [Try this link for support for kindle books.](#)

Learn More

Is there any way to learn more about the Always Hungry? Solution?

If you haven't already joined our online community, please sign up using the link at www.DrDavidLudwig.com for extra information, tips, supports and suggestions along the way.

Learn more about our [JumpStart Your Metabolic Health Coaching Program](#) and [Meal Planning Classes on our website](#).

Please connect with us on Facebook and Twitter, and use the hashtag #AlwaysHungry to share all of your experiences on the program. We really want to hear from you!

Our Social Media Links:

- [Dr. David Ludwig on Facebook](#)
- [Dr. David Ludwig on Twitter](#)
- [Free Facebook Community](#)
- [Chef Dawn on Facebook](#)
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