

The McDougall Newsletter

Volume 5 Issue 7



Hash Brown Potatoes



Mashed Potatoes



Baked Potatoes



This is what Mary's Mini-Diet looks like day after day

Last month's newsletter about our simplified version of the McDougall Diet created much interest and many questions. Mary's Mini-McDougall Diet is offered as a way to ease the learning curve for those just starting our program and a means to increase the efficiency of the regular McDougall Diet by simplifying food choices. The diet follows the basic principles of the McDougall Program: starch-based with the addition of fruits and vegetables, but limits food choices to one kind of starch and repetitive selections of green and yellow vegetables and fruits. The same starch and vegetables are eaten everyday. You can read about the diet in the June 2006 McDougall Newsletter: <http://www.drmcDougall.com/misc/2006nl/june/marvs.htm>.

Here are some answers to important questions that surfaced following the introduction of Mary's Mini-Diet.

What is the most important lesson I should learn from the Mini-Diet experience?

When describing the excellent health and youthful appearance of the Native Americans, Benjamin Rush wrote in 1776, "...the old proverb may well be verified: *Natura paucis contenta*—nature is satisfied with little..." Most people believe a wide variety of foods is necessary for good health. This belief favors the food industry and helps sell the 20,000 products that line the supermarket shelves. Look at the consequences of eating a diet with a wide variety of foods—hundreds of millions of fat, sick people living in Western societies.

Why is this diet more efficient than the regular, or even the Maximum Weight Loss, version of the McDougall Program?

Variety causes people to consume more food and more calories. Populations of people like rural Asians, Africans, and Peruvians, are known for being trim and avoiding diseases common to Westerners, and their diets consist of limited kinds of foods—a starch and a few locally grown vegetables and fruits. Fortunately, the foods are designed to be nutritionally complete long before they reach the dinner table.

As a food is eaten, it becomes less appealing, but the taste and appearance of other foods remain relatively unchanged. As a result, more is eaten during a meal consisting of a variety of foods than during a meal with just one food, even if that food is a favorite.^{1,2}

So a simple way to decrease your intake of calories is to make your food choices the same—or in another term, monotonous. This cuts way down on planning, too.

Simple meal plans also have health advantages, especially for those who are highly sensitive. Simple diets result in fewer challenges from the ingredients, like proteins, of foods to the digestive and immune systems of the body—this is especially important for people with allergic and autoimmune diseases (like asthma and arthritis), and those with inflammatory bowel diseases (like gastritis and colitis).

Comments on 10 day MMD from the McDougall discussion board

Fern: Lost 3 pounds in 10 days

I started this because I was just plain overeating. I was stuffing myself to the point of having heartburn, but couldn't stop. Mary's Mini-Diet worked immediately.

Beans bother me.

I plan to continue this into the foreseeable future.

Should I eat a different starch every day?

In the June 2006 newsletter I did not make clear enough the importance of monotony. As a result many people who tried the Mini-Diet introduced greater variety than I had planned by eating a different starch each day, rather than, for example potatoes everyday for 10-days. The fewer varieties of foods that make up the meal plan, the greater will be the weight loss.

Comments on 10 day MMD from the McDougall discussion board

Rob and Betty:

We've finally found something that's simple enough to understand and simple enough to follow! Even the McDougall Maximum Weight Loss Program gave us too many choices and too many chances to go astray. But when you know you're having potatoes, and your second choice is potatoes, how can you miss? Freshly-made salsa (tomatoes, onion, cilantro, a touch of salt, and a jalapeño (seeds and all -- ground up in the juice of one lime) makes life complete! (It also makes life weigh a little less -- 8 pounds for Rob and 6 for me.)

Can I eat more green and yellow vegetables and lose faster?

When weight loss is your goal you can introduce more of the principals of the Maximum Weight Loss Program into the Mini-Diet. Green and yellow vegetables, like summer squashes (zucchini), pea pods, lettuce leaves, broccoli, cauliflower, and sprouts will fill the stomach with fewer calories than starchy vegetables. Use more of these low calories foods to encourage faster weight loss. But be sure to consume enough starch to satisfy your appetite and don't go hungry by restricting the amount you eat.

Comments on 10 day MMD from the McDougall discussion board

Roberta Joiner

Re-set my taste buds so simpler foods taste better than they did.

Greater appreciation of grains, beans, fruits and vegetables!

I won't be ordering a new size 6 wardrobe, but if I lose 2 lb. every 10 days, in 80 days I'll be down 16 lb.

Should I eat when I am hungry on Mary's Mini-Diet?

Counting calories is a waste of mental energy. You have a highly efficient hunger drive that accurately regulates your food consumption—as long as the correct foods are placed into your intestine. Problems occur when foods not designed for the human body—foods too rich for our systems like candy, meat, milk, cheese, eggs, etc.—are consumed.

Grazing works better for weight loss and lowering cholesterol—which means snacks are fine. But snacks should be of the same foods as your meals, like boiled or roasted potatoes and dry-fried French fries with the diet pictured above of potatoes—not crackers and pretzels.

Comments on 10 day MMD from the McDougall discussion board

Malva: Net weight loss: 3 lb. in 10 days

I was able to eat to satisfaction and not feel "deprived".

I suppose if I made it simpler and ate only rice, broccoli and greens three meals a day (or a couple of jars of baby food), then I would have lost more.

Shouldn't I avoid potatoes because they are high glycemic index?

Glycemic index is just one quality of a food as discussed in the July 2006 newsletter article: Glycemic Index—Not Ready for Prime Time. Potatoes are high in fiber and have a low calorie concentration. Potatoes have virtually no fat to wear (1% of calories). A large potato contains 150 calories. For a man, 10 potatoes a day means 1500 calories—for a woman 7 potatoes means 1050 calories—which translates into effortless, painless weight loss. Potatoes are the ideal "diet" food—low calorie, nutritious, and tasty.

Can I do this part-time?

Mary's Mini-Diet is a "diet." You should use this as a "tool" to knock off a few extra pounds quickly. When needed, use the Mini-Diet as a tool to improve your adherence to your usual low-fat, starch-based diet—a means to get you back on track with little thought and effort.

How are winter and summer squashes different?

Winter squashes are round, elongated, scalloped and pear-shaped with flesh from golden-yellow to bright orange. Because of their hard, thick skins they can be stored for months in a cool basement and will last the winter (6 months); as a result, they are referred to as "winter squash." They are much higher in calories than summer squash, and therefore, can serve as the starch centerpiece of your meal plan. Acorn, banana, butternut, Hubbard, spaghetti, and turban are some examples of winter squashes.

Thin-skin summer squashes were once only available in the summer, but now, due to worldwide transportation and hothouse growing, are available all year round. Common examples are zucchini, yellow (crookneck, straightneck), and scalloped (patty pan) squashes. These are too low in calories to serve as the starch-centerpiece of your meal plan and are to be thought of as green and yellow vegetable (side dishes) additions.

Are there salad dressings and other spices that I can use?

Adding salt, spices, and low fat salad dressings will make the diet more enjoyable and likely increase the length of time one will follow the Mini-Diet—and that is important. On the other hand, enhancing enjoyment of your meals will cause you to eat a little more—but the weight-losing health-enhancing powers of a simple diet are so strong that spice will not detract from the ultimate benefits. So make your simple meals taste good.

This is a great way to learn to love the McDougall Diet.

Warrior from the McDougall discussion board writes:

“No condiments, no sauces, just plain. I like it that way because once I taste a sauce or condiment the slippery slope comes a'callin! That's why this "diet" is so appealing -- once we're off it, regular McDougalling will be very satisfying for a lifetime.”

Is one cooking method better for weight loss than another?

Methods that more thoroughly cook foods will make more calories available for digestion. This may be one reason mashed potatoes are more delicious to me than are baked potatoes—I can eat more potatoes when they are boiled and mashed. However, in practical terms the method of cooking will not detract from the ultimate benefits of a simple meal plan. Choose the method of cooking that brings you most enjoyment (But stay within the rules—no deep-frying potatoes).

What do I do about the coffee and alcohol?

Coffee enhances weight loss by increasing the body's rate of metabolism. Alcohol slows weight loss by providing easily utilizable calories (alcohol). Alcohol also removes inhibitions causing people to eat more rich foods. Alcohol, itself, is not turned into body fat. Therefore, with weight loss as the only goal, coffee can be consumed and alcohol will likely slow the benefits from the diet. Neither one is a health food.

Comments on 10 day MMD from the McDougall discussion board

Chaplain Mike:

I just returned from an International Convention for Police Chaplains. Anytime I go away for a week I always gain 5 lb. on an average. I came home and had remained the same. Since I started Mary's diet I have lost 10 lb. That makes a total of 23 lb. since I left my dietitian and returned to the McDougall's.

References:

- 1) [Spiegel TA](#), [Stellar E](#). Effects of variety on food intake of underweight, normal-weight and overweight women. *Appetite*. 1990 Aug;15(1):47-61.
- 2) [Stubbs RJ](#), [Johnstone AM](#), [Mazlan N](#), [Mbaiwa SE](#), [Ferris S](#). Effect of altering the variety of sensorially distinct foods, of the same macronutrient content, on food intake and body weight in men. *Eur J Clin Nutr*. 2001 Jan;55(1):19-28.