

Solving Food-Monitoring Problems

I forget to carry my food log with me when I eat out.

- Buy a small notebook or notepad that you can keep with you at all times.
- Write down the foods you eat on a napkin or disposable placemat and transfer the notes to your food log when you return home.
- Use a mobile app on your smartphone.

I have a hard time estimating food sizes when I eat away from home and don't have measuring spoons or scales to use for measuring food portions.

- Use your hands and other familiar objects to estimate your **serv**ing size! See your HEED book for photos to help you with this.
- Here are some other resources you may find helpful:
 - <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-topics/weight-control/just-enough/Pages/just-enough-for-you.aspx>
 - http://education.wichita.edu/caduceus/examples/servings/handy_reminders.htm
 - <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/downloads/servingcard7.pdf>

I only have time to fill out my food log at night, and by then I often forget what I have eaten.

- Buy a small notebook or notepad that you can keep with you at all times.
- Record what you eat and drink in your smartphone notes or recorder. Or send yourself a text. Transfer the information to your food log at night.

I don't know what foods and drinks to include on my food log.

- Record **everything** you have to eat or drink on your food log: all meals, snacks, and nibbles!
- Don't forget to record all beverages, including alcoholic beverages.
- Don't forget to record all condiments, dressings, and spreads.
- Don't forget to record all mints, sweets, and chocolates nibbled on during the day; they may be small, but they still count.

Food monitoring is too time consuming for me.

- Use your smartphone to
 - access a tracking app,
 - audio record what you eat and drink throughout the day, or
 - snap photos of everything you eat or drink.Then, transfer the information to your food log at night.
- Write down a brief description of the food (and amount) right after you eat it. Transfer the information to your food log at a convenient time (such as before bed or during breakfast).
- Make food monitoring part of your daily routine. With practice and time, you may begin to recognize your eating habits and be able to keep track of what you eat and drink during the day in your head.

Solving Food-Monitoring Problems

I don't know in which food groups to place combination foods like pizza and hamburgers.

- Break down combination food into components (hamburger = 2 grains + approximately 1-1/2 meats).
- If a component is smaller than a serving size, don't count it. For example, one slice of pineapple pizza = 1 grain, 1/2 to 1 dairy, not enough tomato sauce to count as a vegetable, and probably not enough pineapple to count as a fruit. However, if you eat several pieces of pineapple pizza, the fruit and vegetable toppings might be enough to count as a serving.

I find that I change my eating habits when I have to write down what I eat.

- That's probably a good thing! If recording what you eat makes you think twice about eating that extra dessert, it may be extra motivation to keep up with your food monitoring. When people write down everything they eat and drink, they often discover that there's a certain time of day or place where their healthy eating habits get off track.
- Use this to your advantage; look at your food records over time and see how they've helped you achieve your HEED goals.

I don't know where to go to find the amount of calories in the foods and drinks I record.

- Examine food labels for calorie content. Remember that calories listed are for one serving of the food. Also, what is listed as one serving on the food label might be different from a HEED recommended amount.
- Scan restaurant menus for the healthy options; they often have the calories listed for that meal. Also, go to the websites of chain restaurants for detailed nutrition information of the foods on their current menu.
- Use a food tracking app on your smartphone.
- Buy a book such as [Calorie King](#) that lists calories (and other nutrients) for foods and restaurant meals; these books can be found on the Internet or at your local bookstore.

I have a hard time writing down foods that I feel guilty about eating.

- If you eat it, make yourself record it. You don't have to share your food records with anyone, so be honest with yourself.
- If you feel guilty about recording it, this might indicate an area that you need to improve. Use this to your advantage and try to replace a less healthy food with a more nutrient-dense food that will help you achieve your HEED goals.

I don't know how specific I have to be when recording my intake.

- Be **very** specific!
- Fully describe everything you eat and drink in detail: for example, low-fat potato chips (crisps), low-fat milk, Oreo chocolate cookies, fried chicken with breading or breadcrumbs, and mushrooms sautéed in butter.

Solving Food-Monitoring Problems

- Be sure to include ingredients used in food preparation (such as oil) and condiments added to your food at the table (such as butter, sugar, or dressing).
- Writing down brand names may help when you're trying to figure out the amount of calories in a food from a mobile app or website.