



Courtesy of Apple

There's an App for that

Food Journal Edition

by Pam Davis, RN, CBN, CCM

We know food journals are a great tool to keep us on track with our weight-loss goals. There are multiple types of food journal apps available. We're going to focus on electronic food journals available on the iPad, iTouch and iPhone. The reviews will compare cost, ease of use and general usefulness.

Whether you faithfully turn your food journal into someone on a regular basis or keep it for yourself, that visual reminder of your food intake can be tremendously helpful to track trends in your food behaviors.

I am a firm believer that in addition to our food intake, we also need to keep track of the setting and the mood we're in while eating. Eating breakfast in your car on the way to work? Chances are it is fast food. Eating supper in front of the TV while watching your favorite show? You will likely be distracted from your meal and instead of eating until you are full, you eat until the plate/bowl/bag is empty. I also strongly encourage tracking liquid calories separately.

Between the "Lifestyles" and "Healthcare & Fitness" categories, there are more than 15,000 applications, or apps, on iTunes. The apps reviewed made it to my trial either because of their reviews, graphics or price. For consistency, I entered the following data in all programs:

DATA

Sex: Female

Height: 5'8"

Weight: 178 pounds

Goal weight: 175 pounds

The majority of the programs listed my daily calorie target at 1,750-2,000+ calories. Being a gastric bypass patient, I know that is more calories than I need, so I manually adjusted the target range down to 1,400 calories. To gauge the variety of the food database, I searched items such as sushi, creamer and mangos.

Apps for iPhone and iPod Touch

(These apps may be used on the iPad, but are not yet optimized for usage on this device.)



Calorie One-Calorie, Exercise and Weight Tracker

(Healthcare & Fitness)



After entering your data and adjusting the settings, the home screen for this app shows your daily calorie

budget, calories taken in, calories burned, net calories and your progress. You can access full nutritional information as well as charts illustrating daily, weekly or monthly trends in caloric intake as well as your intake of protein and your daily exercise. This app is very visually appealing on the iPhone. As with many of the apps, simply click "I ate this" or "I did this" to add it to your log.



Carb Master

(Healthcare & Fitness)



This app keeps track of your daily calorie, fat and protein intake, but primarily focuses on carbs. One of the coolest features (unless of course you're taking in too many carbs) is how it shows your carbs on top of the icon on your phone so you can tell at a glance how many carbs you consumed. You can easily track your water intake and weight. The diabetes feature allows you to set your target glucose, enter multiple results daily while also allowing you to enter the amount of insulin required. An extra nice feature is the ability to email results to your healthcare professional with just a couple of steps.



DailyBurn-Calorie, Workout, and Fitness Companion

(Healthcare & Fitness)



During setup you can choose from a low-fat, low carb, body-builder or balanced diet which adjusts the percentages of fat, carbs and protein. This app allows you to purchase an add-on barcode scanner for \$4.99 so you can scan the barcode and then add the food to your journal.

This app is a delight to search as the results yield photos of the food you are searching, not just a list. The nutrition results appear like they would on a food label which helps to instill the need to read labels. You have the ability to add a food, including the brand and photo.

This app also provides free workout plans you can customize and allows you to track your progress. The calendar will then show you the days your workouts are scheduled (no excuses for forgetting). For an additional \$9.99, you can purchase the pro version and expand your workout options. I evaluated the free version only.



Intelli-Diet

(Healthcare & Fitness)



I would like to give this app two thumbs up for the cute little icon and the fact that it actually reminds you to eat; however, its cuteness does not make up for how user-unfriendly it is. When you first set up your profile, you choose what foods you prefer and what foods you dislike and the app will give you suggested foods for each meal. These

suggested foods are not always in the form of a ready to go meal, often it is merely a random list of foods. Redeeming features: it's easy to track your water intake and you can email your shopping list.



Lose It!

(Healthcare & Fitness)



When I asked friends what app to load on my iPad and iPhone, this was on everyone's list. It's free, easy to use and has more than 290,000 reviews on iTunes. If that's not enough to convince you, aside from the standard features to add foods and add exercise, Lose It! includes the ability to add motivators (reminders sent to your iPhone when you forget to log a meal) and the ability to share your progress on social networking sites. You can upload your photo and ask friends to sign-up with you.

Apps Optimized for Use on iPad

(These apps may still work on your iPhone or iTouch, but you may be paying more than you would for one specifically for these devices.)



Sparkpeople Diet and Food Tracker

(Healthcare & Fitness)



By all counts, this should be an amazing app. The SparkPeople Web site is awesome and the SparkPeople recipes app is awesome. I have this app on my Blackberry and it's awesome, so imagine my excitement at seeing this app specifically for the iPad. Awesome, right? Wrong. I've downloaded it, opened, closed, reopened, deleted and downloaded it again and every time I open it, an error message saying "connection error" comes up. I'm not the only one who's had this problem. I, as well as others, have reported it. If you can get it to work, it should be great.



MyNetDiary HD

(Healthcare & Fitness)



This was the first app I downloaded to my iPad. I had looked at this app again and again while

awaiting my purchase. The app did not disappoint. As with many of the other apps, you can track your foods, set your favorites, track your exercise and monitor your progress. One of the bonuses with this app is the library of articles that illustrate practical tips as well as motivational articles. This would be my favorite app, although it has the hefty price of \$9.99.



GoMeals HD

(Healthcare & Fitness)



This high-definition app, developed by Sanofi-Aventis, is free and has one of the coolest features! You touch the compass

icon in the corner and it will bring up a map of the area where you're currently located. Then touch restaurants and select the type. For example, "Asian," and it locates the nearest restaurant. When you touch the restaurant name, it then brings up the address and the option to view their menu.

Click the food to see ahead of time what will be a better option from their menu, or after you've eaten simply touch the "add to" button and it will add this to your food journal. You can also add foods through the more traditional methods of searching by food, restaurant and grocery. The home page is a dinner plate that tells you at a glance how many calories you have left as well as what your percentage of carbs, protein and fat are for the day. FAVORITE APP OVERALL!



iFood Diary

(Healthcare & Fitness)



This food journal is truly that, a food journal. While it is outstanding as far as the visual (it looks like a virtual agenda book complete with tabs)

and it allows you the option to export your food logs and send them via email, the huge downside is that it doesn't come with a food database. This means you have to seek another source to tell you how many calories were in the foods and beverages you consumed.



LIVESTRONG.COM

(Healthcare & Fitness)



This is an app I believe a lot of people have been waiting for. The LIVESTRONG site, also linked to the Daily Plate,

is a favorite desktop food journal and now it comes to the iPad. The search functions for both foods and exercise are phenomenal. One of the nicest features is you

can enter your data on either your iPad or your desktop, then click the sync button and now your information is on both devices. It is a great app for a great price.

Other Apps Worth Checking Out



Eat This, Not That Game

(\$ (Healthcare & Fitness)

This app is a fun way to test your knowledge on healthier options when dining out and a great way to teach the kids.



Cook This, Not That

(\$\$\$ (Healthcare & Fitness)

This app provides healthier alternatives to some commonly used recipes and also includes an ingredient list and directions for preparation.



SparkRecipes (SparkPeople)

(\$ (Lifestyle)

This app has tons of great recipes searchable by low carb, gluten free, high protein, etc. It also includes videos of multiple recipes. Great, free app!



The Snack App

(\$ (Healthcare & Fitness)

Another free app, the Snack App, allows you to search snacks by calorie range (50, 100, 200, etc.) and can tell you how to burn those calories too. Choose snacks by salty, sweet, crunchy, cheesy, healthy, sinful or choose the "surprise me" option.



Epicurious-the Cooks Companion

(\$ (Lifestyle)

This is a free app that allows you to sort recipes based on your skill level: "I can barely cook" to "I cook like a pro." Create an ingredients list for shopping or email your favorite recipes to friends.



Big Fork, Little Fork Kids Meal Recipes

(\$ (Lifestyle)

This is one of the coolest apps for your iPad. It costs \$4.99, but is worth it. It has kid-friendly recipes, games and videos all centered around healthier eating.

Conclusion

Now that I've kept a total of 24 food journals throughout the last six weeks, which ones will make the cut on my devices?

On the iPad, I've narrowed it down to: GoMeals HD, Calorie 1 and Carb Master, but GoMeals is definitely in first place.

On the iPhone, I'm going with Lose It! and the Daily Burn. I'm not sure which one will take the final spot.

However, I learned one thing - keeping a food journal is much easier than keeping eight and once you pick one that meets your needs, it's super easy and loaded with valuable information about you and your habits. If used properly, it will help you not only identify what you eat, but why you are eating it.

About the Author:

Pam Davis, RN, CBN, CCM, is a certified bariatric nurse and the Program Director for Centennial Center for the Treatment of Obesity in Nashville. Pam serves in multiple volunteer roles including the Board of Directors of the Obesity Action Coalition and the Tennessee Chapter of the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS). Pam chairs the Integrated Health Clinical Issues and Guidelines Committee of the ASBMS and the Health Systems team of the

Tennessee Obesity Taskforce. Through her work at Centennial, Pam strives to educate employers and physicians on obesity prevention and treatment.

Reference Symbols



For use on
iPhone or
iTouch



Optimized for
use on iPad

Price Range



\$.99-1.99



\$5.00-9.99



\$2.00-4.99



\$10.00+



Okay, basic but does the job



Decent app, a few more bells and whistles



Great, fun app, visually pleasing and lots of features



ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



VIBRANT COMMUNITY



NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



ANNUAL CONVENTION



ADVOCACY



PUBLIC EDUCATION

LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
 - Community Discussion Forum
 - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



JOIN TODAY: GO TO [OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN](https://obesityaction.org/join)

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