



An HMR® Program

## **Guidelines for using and selecting Meal Replacements (MR)**

### **A Meal Replacement is...**

A single serve snack or meal. You are meant to eat the whole thing, not portion size, share, or save some for later.

Easily/Quickly Prepared. If you are tired, stressed, or hungry, you should be able to eat within a few minutes. It should have only a few steps: Open, heat (maybe), eat.

Within a calorie range that supports weight loss. You should not have to eat a ridiculously small portion size. You can get a candy bar down to 100 calories, but you'll only get to eat one bite. A Meal Replacement will allow you to eat a large amount of food, for very few calories.

Tasty. It is a REQUIREMENT that you enjoy the foods you eat. Sometimes you'll need to add spices, or fruits/vegetables, but the end product must be something you enjoy.

### **The BEST Meal Replacements are also...**

Flexible. It's nice if you can add spices, sauces, and vegetables to give the MR variety. A plain chicken and rice could become Chinese stir fry, buffalo/ranch, or Indian Tikka Masala.

Filling. You don't want to be hungry again in 15 minutes. Try to look for MR with protein and fiber, and experiment with different foods to see what you find satisfying.

Healthy. Most MR will be healthy enough if they fit the requirements we lay out here. To push for the best MR, consider sodium content, vitamins, sugar, and other nutritional qualities.

Easily stored/Portable. MR can be frozen, refrigerated, or room temperature. At home, you may be able to use all of these options, but what if you want something to keep in your car? Do you have freezer space at work? What will be helpful if you are staying in a hotel room?

Affordable. Some MR are more expensive. They may be worth it if they taste good, or if you use them specifically as a treat. Usually, though, we want our MR to fit within a grocery budget.

Attached to a plan. MR designed as part of a weight loss plan will come with guidelines to make sure you are using them correctly. They are usually also designed to be overall healthier. Generic frozen meals or shakes CAN be useful (and healthy, too), but it's a little safer to go with something designed with that purpose, and with data to back it up.



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## **MHW's Minimum MR Requirements**

### **Entrees**

Under 350 Calories (lower is better)

Portion size MORE than 6 oz/170 g (1 cup/250 mL) (bigger is better)

ALWAYS intend on adding fruits and vegetables in or alongside

For weight loss: do NOT add more meat/grain (pasta/rice)

Should be a one-person, self-contained meal (I can eat the whole thing if I want). It doesn't count if it is meant to be divided into separate portions. For example, a frozen lasagna meant to feed a whole family may meet all of our requirements, but it still requires you to put in the effort to measure out your share.

### **Shakes**

Under 200 calories (lower is better)

Portion size more than 8 fl oz (250 mL) when prepared

Protein MORE than 10 grams (higher is better)

ALWAYS intend to blend with ice/frozen fruit. This creates a bigger volume that takes longer to drink.

Usually best to go simple (chocolate or vanilla). This way you can add your own ingredients and create your own flavors. You don't need a strawberry MR- just take a vanilla shake and add frozen strawberries or strawberry extract.

For weight loss: only add foods that fall into the 1-3 range (see the HMR® Calorie Guide)

### **Bars**

Under 200 calories (lower is better)

Portion size more than 1.4 oz (40 g)

You want these to be as big as possible. You also often break these down into smaller pieces so they last longer.

These are best, not as weight loss foods, but specifically to cover cravings. If you are hungry, stressed, bored, etc., it is better to use a different food choice with more substance, or that is lower on the Calorie Guide (1-3s).

If you are concerned about how you use these, consider having something in the 1-3s WITH the bar. I.E. 1 bar isn't enough to fill your craving for sweets? Try having a bar and drinking a shake at the same time. Or try having a parfait: yogurt and strawberries with a bar cut up and crumbled over the top.