

## Meal Replacements-are they worth it?

Scientific studies have shown that meal replacements (a single food or pre-packaged selection of foods that is sold as replacement for one or more daily meals, but not as a total diet replacement), are effective in weight maintenance and health improvement by preventing increases in weight over time. That's because meal replacements allow for the better control over calories due to fixed calorie intake; defines portion size; give alternatives to fast food; and promotes fullness because most have a substantive amount of protein. But with so many choices of pre-packaged meals, diet bars, and drinks, how does one choose? Over the past two years, we've tasted many of the products available in the grocery store, on-line, and at OTC, to help take some of the guess work out of your meal replacement purchases.

In order to come up with the criteria for the products tested, we referred to the USDA dietary guidelines for 2005 along with our own knowledge and experience. By converting the information to percentages, it can be applied to any calorie-level meal-plan you may be following. The products are first ranked by taste, considering that even if the product is good nutritionally, if it doesn't taste good, we won't eat it. The stars are given if the product meets the right percentage of nutrients. For example, if a product has 15 grams of protein and 190 calories, that would be 31.5% calories from protein. OTC recommends around 25% calories from protein, so the product would get a star. The USDA recommends 31 grams of fiber, and 1779 mg of sodium per day (based on a 2,000 calorie diet). We did our best to average them out, estimating that a person eats 3 meals and 2 snacks through the day, and the assigned stars accordingly

## Bars and Drinks

Taste 0-5	Pro ≥ 25%	CHO ≤ 50%	Fat < 30% Sat < 8%	Fiber 4-5 g	Na+ <200 mg	Product  (wt.g)	Keal	Pro (g)	CHO (g)	Fat (g)	Fiber (g)	Na+ (mg)	Sugar ETOH
X means it meets the critiera set by OTC						Nutritional Informaiton							
4.40	—		1/2		X	Luna Lemon Zest 48g	180	10	26	4/3	3	150	—
4.15	X	X	1/2	X		S. Beach Cinnamon Crème 60g	220	19	26	7/3	5	360	18
3.90	X	X		X	X	Atkins Advantage Choc. Peanut Butter 60g	270	19	22	11/6	10	180	—
3.90	X		1/2	X		Mylo Plex Lite Choc. Crisp 54g	190	15	26	4.5/3	4	260	—
3.85	X	X	1/2	X		Cliff Builders Peanut Butter 68g	270	20	30	8/5	4	310	—
3.80	X	X	1/2	—	—	Odyssey Carmel Nut 80g	300	30	30	9/5	1	340	22
3.50	X	X	1/2	X	—	Cliff Builders Chocalate 68g	270	20	30	8/5	4	260	—
3.5	X	X		X	X	Think Thin Choc. Fudge 60g	220	20	24	8/2.5	4	125	8
3.45	X	X	1/2	?	X	Zone Perfect Choc. PB 50g	210	16	21	7/4	?	210	—
3.4	X	X	1/2	X	—	S. Beach Diet Bar 60g	210	19	26	6/3	5	360	18
3.38	X	X	1/2	—	X	Balance Bar Cookie Bar 50g	200	15	22	6/4	<1	190	—
3.36	X	X	1/2	—	—	Zone Perfect Fudge Graham 50g	210	16	21	7/4	1	270	—
3.32	X	X	1/2	—	X	Pure Protein Choc. Deluxe 78g	270	32	26	7/5	3	160	11
3.2	—	—	X	X		Odwalla Bar Berries GoMega 62g							
3.15	X	X	1/2	—	X	Balance Gold Chewy Choc. Chip 50g	210	15	22	7/4	<1	140	—
3.15	X	X	1/2	X	X	Think Thin Brownie Crunch 60g	220	20	25	7/2.5	4	170	—
3.5	X	X	1/2	X		New Direction Cocoa Café 45g	160	15	18	5/3	5	260	2
3.4	X	X	1/2		X	New Direction Cookies n' Cream 38g	150	10	19	4/2.5	0	135	—
3.15			1/2	X	NA	Optifast Peanut Butter 1.59oz	160	8	23	8/2	4	NA	NA
2.9	X	X	—	X	X	Atkins Advantage Choc. Coconut 60g	230	19	21	11/8	9	100	—

2.75	X	X	1/2	—	—	Promax Almond Toffee 72g	290	20	34	8/6	1	300	4	
1.1	X	X		—	—	Bariatric Advantage Vanilla	160	16	20		—	480	—	
.7	X	X	X	—	X	Achiev one Vanilla Nut 9.5 Fl oz	120	20	5	0/0	—	200	—	
.7	X	X	1/2	—	X	Designer Protein Choc. 24g	100	18	2	2/1	—	80	—	
3.9	X	X	X	X	—	Myoplexlite Choc. Fudge 11 Fl oz	190	25	20	2.5/0	5	400	—	
3.7	X	X	X	—	—	New Direction Van Pudding 49g	200	27	10	6/1	—	460	—	
3.6	X	X	X	X	—	New Direction Choc. Fiber Drink 54g	210	27	14	6/1.5	5	660	—	
3.6	X	X	X	—	—	Optifast Vanilla 42.1g	160	14	20	3/0	—	230	—	
3.5	X	X	X	—	—	Advant Edge Carb Control French Vanilla 11 Fl oz	110	17	2	3/0	1	260	—	
2.9	X	X	1/2	X	X	Atkins Choc. Delight	160	15	2	9/0	4	110	—	
2.9	X	X	X	—	—	Optifast Chocolate Hp 51.1g	200	26	10	6/1.5	—	480	—	
2.7	X	X	X	—	—	Susan Bariatric Liquid Protein Fruitpunch 2.9 oz	100	25	0	0	—	64	—	
2.50	X	X	X	—	NA	Healthwise Proticcino 23.5g	80	15	5	.4/0	—	NA	—	
2.2	X	X	X	—	X	Healthwise Kiwi Strawberry Twist 20g	70	15	1	0	0	10	—	
2.0	X	X	X	—	—	Optifast Chicken Soup 800 42.1g	160	35	20	3/0	—	600	—	
2.0	X	X	X	—	—	Optifast Choc. 800 42.1g	160	14	20	3/0	—	230	—	
1.9			1/2	X	X	Slimfast Optima Creamy Milk Choc. 11 Fl oz	190	10	25	6/2.5	5	200	—	
1.8	X	X		—	—	Bariatric Advantage Vanilla Choc.	160	16	20		—	480	—	

2.9	X	X	1/2	X	X	Atkins Choc. Delight	160	15	2	9/0	4	110	—	
2.9	X	X	X	—	—	Optifast Chocolate Hp 51.1g	200	26	10	6/1.5	—	480	—	
2.7	X	X	X	—	—	Susan Bariatric Liquid Protein Fruitpunch 2.9 oz	100	25	0	0	—	64	—	
2.50	X	X	X	—	NA	Healthwise Proticcino 23.5g	80	15	5	.4/0	—	NA	—	
2.2	X	X	X	—	X	Healthwise Kiwi Strawberry Twist 20g	70	15	1	0	0	10	—	
2.0	X	X	X	—	—	Optifast Chicken Soup 800 42.1g	160	35	20	3/0	—	600	—	
2.0	X	X	X	—	—	Optifast Choc. 800 42.1g	160	14	20	3/0	—	230	—	
1.9			1/2	X	X	Slimfast Optima Creamy Milk Choc. 11 Fl oz	190	10	25	6/2.5	5	200	—	
1.8	X	X		—	—	Boriatic Advantage Vanilla Choc.	160	16	20		—	480	—	