

# Tracking calories has never been easier

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(HealthDay)—Gone are the days of hunting through calorie and carbohydrate counting books to find the information you need to plan weight loss menus.

Now all that and more is in the palm of your hand—if you have the right smartphone app, that is.

There are hundreds of apps for dieters, many of them free. How can you sort through the choices? Look for the apps with the kind of tools you need.

If you're counting calories, make sure the app lists the widest variety of foods in the widest variety of measurements—cups and ounces as well as grams. Because cutting back on fat calories helps with [weight loss](#) and [heart health](#), look for an app that breaks down the saturated, unsaturated and [trans fats](#) in common foods. Some apps also keep track of most [essential nutrients](#), from vitamin C to calcium.

Many apps have built-in motivation. You might want a daily diet tip to stay on track or a digital diary to record and keep a running total of calories eaten every day. There are even apps for following special diets, like tracking carbs and blood sugar for those with diabetes, apps with low-calorie recipes, and apps that let you scan packaged foods at the supermarket to get instant feedback on whether they're good for you.

Since many apps are free, have fun experimenting until you find the one you like best. One caution: Even the best app can't physically stop you from eating, so consider it just one part, however helpful, of your plan to lose weight.

**More information:** For more details on apps, check out AARP's 2017 list of [calorie-counting apps](#).

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