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LOSING WEIGHT WITH 4LEAF

By J. Morris Hicks

First of all, 4Leaf is not a weight-loss diet. It is an eating concept based on the pursuit of vibrant health--for ourselves and for our planet. Conveniently, if your goal is vibrant health, one of the many benefits of eating high on the 4Leaf scale is effortless and permanent weight-loss.

You feed your body what it needs for vibrant health and it will automatically seek its ideal weight. So why are there so many overweight vegetarians? Because many of them eat a lot more processed foods and a lot fewer whole plants than you might think--at least until they take the 4Leaf Survey!

Although some don't admit it, the vast majority of folks make changes in their diet for one primary reason--to lose weight. Even those who truly make the changes in the pursuit of vibrant health, are a little disappointed if they don't see the weight-loss they were expecting.

This chapter was designed to help people maximize their chances of enjoying the ideal weight and body that they are

seeking. It all boils down to just four things: breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks! Being creatures of habit, it's time to start forming some healthy new eating habits for all of your routine meals and snacks. Let's take a look at each one and start thinking about how you're going to put more whole plants in all of those meals that you eat regularly.

Breakfast. As the most important meal of the day, it's really critical to make sure that your *routine* breakfast derives well over 80% of its calories from whole plants. An aspiring 4Leaf friend of mine hasn't been able to lose all of her excess weight, and she typically begins her day with a toasted English muffin and peanut butter. **Red flag #1.**

For starters, the English muffin is not a whole plant and at best, even the "low fat" peanut butter is over 55% fat; regular is over 70%. That combination has no chance of promoting weight-loss. We recommend that you get real serious about this extremely important meal and make those first few bites of the day among your healthiest.

Lunch and Dinner. For some people, lunch is the big meal of the day and for others, it's dinner. Whatever it is for you, we once again recommend that you take the time to make sure that your *routine* meals (things you eat several times a week) are mostly whole plants with less than 20% fat. Here are a few things to consider when eating at lunch or dinner at home or in restaurants:

1. Make sure that your salad is not mostly fat. Most of the calories in restaurant salads do not come from whole plants. They come from the dressing and the ubiquitous cheese. Even 100% plant-based salads usually derive over half their calories from the salad dressing or olive oil. And if you eliminate that dressing, your salad likely won't have enough calories to last you for two hours. So just add some grains, legumes or potatoes and you'll be fine.

2. Pasta is rarely a 4Leaf meal. We find that aspiring 4Leaf-ers who load up on pasta and bread at every meal have trouble achieving the weight-loss they might be expecting. The problem is that neither pasta nor bread is a whole plant, in nature's package. That doesn't mean you can't eat pasta and bread, but you will need to do a little tweaking to make it a healthy meal.

When ordering pasta, we suggest telling the waiter that you would like to have a small "side" of whole grain pasta without the cream sauce. Then ask for a full-size plate of vegetables along with a small portion of whole grain bread. While this meal may be only in the 3Leaf range (70% of calories from whole plants), the "menu version" of pasta primavera will typically not even score at the 1Leaf level. Remember my aspiring 4Leaf friend? She continues to eat lots of pasta (usually not even whole wheat) and is still not adding many vegetables. **Red Flag #2.**

3. Think whole veggies, grains and legumes when you think about lunch or dinner. And get into a habit of really loading up on the veggies. Then, since those veggies have very few calories, just add some of the starchy foods to prevent getting hungry between meals.

4. Go easy on the non 4Leaf snacks. Many people get a greater percentage of their calories than they would care to admit--munching on snacks between meals. If you want to lose weight, most of those snacks must be at the 4leaf level. As for my aspiring 4Leaf friend, still remaining in her home is a vast array of cookies, salty snacks, nuts, and all manner of sweets. **Red Flag #3.**

Remember the shopping rule: "If it goes in your shopping cart, it will end up in your stomach." In her case, I suggested developing a few healthy 4Leaf snacks that she would truly enjoy. Maybe home-made hummus with

carrots and celery for dipping. Why home-made? Because it's darn near impossible to find packaged hummus in the grocery store that's not loaded with fat from the added oil.

It all begins with discipline; then, when the new healthy eating habits take over, you'll be well on your way to vibrant health--and the trim body you're seeking. (See Appendix C, D, E and F for more ideas.)

Quick story. My son Jason does some moonlighting as a personal trainer and health coach. One of his long-term clients was a doctor (5' 8") who was a bit overweight at 210 pounds. After three years of routine workouts in the gym, and minimal weight-loss, Brian said that he was ready to try that "4Leaf thing" that Jason had told him about.

So, in addition to the routine workouts, they began a 60-day regimen of Brian reporting what he ate each day on an Excel spreadsheet. Jason analyzed and scored all the food and reported back to Brian his daily 4Leaf level via email--with this reminder at the bottom of each message:

"It's not about weight-loss, it's all about vibrant health.
The weight-loss will take care of itself."

Six months later, Brian weighed 160 pounds, after not EVER being under 185 since he was 13. As he went below 180, people kept asking him what his weight goal was. He kept telling them, "My goal is vibrant health, the weight is taking care of itself." The vibrant health also enabled him to eliminate all of his meds, including one for gout.

Several years later, Brian is still enjoying vibrant health and a trim body. He even announced to his entire staff in public (with us there) that Jason Hicks had saved his life.

Need more help? Dr. Graff offers a few more tips:

4LEAF GUIDE TO VIBRANT HEALTH

1. Be honest with yourself about what you're really eating.
2. It's tough to eat 4Leaf (and lose weight) if you still have oil in your diet. It packs 100 calories of fat per tablespoon. It's almost ubiquitous these days: hummus, salad dressing, vegan mayo, etc. Get it out of your diet.
3. Get serious about limiting the heavily processed "whole grain" products in your diet: crackers, bread, pasta, etc.
4. Make water your go-to drink. Most other drinks (juices, plant-milks, alcohol) have lots of calories and no fiber.
5. Even smoothies, which may be 100% whole plants, can cause your body to consume too many calories before feeling full. Drinking these slowly can offset that issue.
6. Although they are whole plants, avocados, olives, nuts and seeds are all very high in fat content and loaded with calories. Limit these if you want to lose weight.
7. Get serious about exercise. See Chapter 35.
8. If you are doing all of the above and are still not progressing to your ideal weight, see your physician. Certain medical conditions or medications may be the problem.

The Bottom Line. Having trouble losing the weight you expected? As with Brian, it's mainly about the food. And it typically boils down to not enough whole fruits, vegetables, grains and legumes and way too much white pasta, olive oil, bread, salty snacks, French fries, onion rings, sweets, alcohol and high fat whole plants like nuts, seeds, olives and avocados.

Get serious about all of these things and you are likely to be rewarded with the trim body that you're seeking.