

The health benefits of eating earlier

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(HealthDay)—Weight loss depends on eating fewer calories than your body uses up. But *when* you eat those calories could make a difference that you'll see on the scale.

An Italian study found that you can boost [weight loss](#) by about 25 percent just by eating 70 percent of each day's calories between breakfast and lunch, including a mid-morning snack, and the other 30 percent as an afternoon snack and dinner.

The researchers used the heart-healthy Mediterranean diet for their study. Participants all cut their intake by 600 calories a day. Their calorie breakdown was 55 percent carbohydrates, 30 percent fat and 15 percent protein, with over 30 grams of fiber daily.

At the end of three months, the participants who ate 70 percent of their daily calories through lunch lost 18 pounds compared to 14 pounds lost by those who ate just 55 percent of their calories through lunch. Plus, they lost more body fat and used insulin more effectively, which can help ward off diabetes.

It will take some effort to rebalance your [calories](#), especially if you're used to eating more later in the day and evening. But the results could be more than worth the switch.

Key guidelines for following the Mediterranean diet:

- Most of the foods you eat should be plant-based, such as vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds.
- Use plant-based oils, notably olive oil in place of animal fats.
- Eat moderate amounts of dairy in no- or low-fat varieties.
- Eat low-to-moderate amounts of fish, less poultry and even less meat.
- Focus on fresh, seasonal foods when possible and try to eliminate processed and packaged foods.

More information: The Cleveland Clinic has a guide to the [Mediterranean diet](#), including easy ways to adopt it at every meal.

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