



Volumetrics

Volumetrics eating is a plan that is simple, logical, and what many dietitians have been teaching for years: fill up on low calorie, nutrient-rich foods and eat less high calorie, nutrient-poor foods. The result: feel satisfied without adding to your waistline. This basic nutrition practice is nothing groundbreaking, but given that the idea was repackaged and given an intriguing name draws the attention of the mass public seeking the latest fad diet. However, volumetrics encourages people to eliminate the word “diet” from their vocabulary and to instead follow a healthier way of eating where one feels full on fewer calories while still consuming satisfying portions. There is no feeling of deprivation from elimination of specific foods or food groups, but instead there is a focus on healthy choices. The volumetrics creator, nutritionist Barbara Rolls, PhD, points out that a severely restrictive diet, eliminates food groups and is not effective in the long run. People simply deprive themselves to the point of frustration, ultimately returning to their previous lifestyle and eating habits.

Volumetrics is based on research at Penn State on satiety—or the feeling of fullness--and on the notion that people feel full based on the volume or amount of food they eat more than just the number of calories, fat, protein or carbohydrates in the meal. Although these nutritional components do play a role in satiety, it does raise a valid point. Take breakfast for example: one could replace a large donut with an entire meal consisting of a glass of nonfat milk, a large hardboiled egg, wheat toast with light spread, and one cup of strawberries for about the same number of calories. We may feel more satisfied due to a combination of the amount of food eaten and the nutrient breakdown of the meal.

Volumetrics pushes low energy dense (or low calorie) foods that also tend to be foods higher in fiber and water content like fruits and vegetables. They also fill you up and increase satiety. Some of the increased level of fullness may also be due to the fact that many of us are visually oriented and feel fuller based on seeing a larger volume of food.

The book, *The Volumetrics Eating Plan*, offers over one hundred recipes, low-fat cooking techniques, recipes or meal modifications, menu planners, charts and helpful sidebars. The American Dietetic Association listed *The Volumetrics Eating Plan* on their “Good Nutrition Reading List” which lists publications that represent resources covering a broad range of nutrition topics and provide reliable, up-to-date nutrition information for public use. However, inclusion of the publication on their list does not represent endorsement by the ADA. Volumetrics seems to promote a nutritionally balanced eating plan which is consistent with USDA recommendations and offers sensible, modest weight loss goals of about 5-10% of current body weight by losing about one to two pounds of weight a week.

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