

How to Do 24-Hour Recall

Photocopy the form below.

24-hour dietary recall form

Time	Food or drink*	Amount eaten or drunk

*Include both foods eaten alone and foods combined in a dish (e.g., soup or stew).

- Explain that you will use this information to evaluate the client's diet and then counsel on how to improve it, if necessary.

- Reassure the client that the information will be kept confidential and used only to assess his or her nutritional needs. Stress that there are no “good” or “bad” foods.
- Do not show in words or facial expressions that you approve or disapprove of any food or drink the client mentions.
- Do not ask questions that would lead the client to think he or she should mention any particular food or drink.
- List everything the client reports eating or drinking, including snacks, beverages, condiments, and all foods eaten at home or away from home during the past 24 hours and the past week.
- Ask questions such as the following to probe for information:
 - What was the first thing you ate or drank when you got up in the morning?
 - Do you remember anything else you ate or drank?
 - Did you eat the food plain or put something else on it?
 - What foods do you especially like or dislike?
 - If you were sick during the 24-hours, how did that affect eating?
- Now go back and ask the client to estimate the size of the portions of each item.
- Do not label the meals “breakfast,” “lunch,” or “dinner.”
- After the client has mentioned all the foods and amounts for the past 24 hours, read the list back and ask whether there anything was left out.
- Thank the client for cooperating.
- Assess whether the client ate foods from all the food groups. If not, counsel the client to add foods from the missing food groups to meals if possible.