

For New Direction VLCD and New Direction LCD Weight Control Programs

Welcome to New Direction VLCD—a program that will help you lose weight and live a healthy life for years to come! We're glad you're here and ready to begin.

A very low calorie diet—like the one used in the New Direction VLCD—will jump start your weight loss and lead you on the road to a healthy lifestyle. Research shows, however, that losing weight by diet alone doesn't work, at least not in the long run. To manage your weight for a lifetime, you need to make permanent changes in your eating and exercise habits and the role food plays in your life. The New Direction VLCD offers weekly group meetings that provide you with the support and skills needed to help you manage your weight. These meetings, led by a behavior counselor, registered dietitian, and exercise specialist, are offered during all four phases of the New Direction VLCD:

Phase I: Screening

Congratulations—you've completed the screening phase and are on your way to a new healthier you!

Phase 2: Reducing

During this time of rapid weight loss, New Direction products will be your only food. These products are nutritionally complete, but they supply fewer calories than your body needs to function. Other needed calories come from your body's fat stores.

Phase 3: Adapting

During this phase, you will gradually decrease the use of the New Direction products and begin to add more food to your daily diet. The calories you consume will be adjusted so that you stop losing, but continue to manage your weight.

Phase 4: Sustaining

In the Sustaining Phase of the program, you'll be eating regular foods and practicing your new lifestyle and weight management skills under the guidance of the New Direction support staff. You'll continue to work with a dietitian to adjust your calories and meal plan, so you can maintain your new body weight and meet your nutritional needs. During the Sustaining Phase, it's important to continue attending your classes. A combination of regular activity, sensible eating and support from others can help you maintain your weight loss.

For best results, you need to commit to all four phases of the New Direction VLCD. Think of the program as one long stretch of highway where the road conditions and driving rules change along the way, but the road keeps on going. There's a definite starting point, but an ambiguous "finish line" because weight management is a life-long process.



Facts About the New Direction VLCD Program

Q. What kind of diet will I follow?

A. During the Reducing Phase of the program, all participants follow a very low calorie diet (also called a VLCD modified fast), consisting of New Direction products. This very low calorie, high protein, low carbohydrate diet causes the body to burn fat for energy. Since VLCDs produce rapid weight loss, medical supervision is necessary.

Q. How does this diet help me lose body fat?

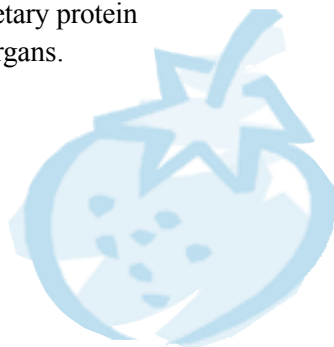
A. Ordinarily, your body uses glucose from carbohydrates in your diet for fuel (energy). When calories are limited, as during a VLCD, your body starts burning fat. The fat is released into the bloodstream and travels to the liver where it is converted to ketones. The ketones are then released back into the bloodstream where they are picked up by other tissues such as muscle and used for energy. This process is called ketosis.

Q. How will I know if I am in ketosis?

A. Because some of the ketones leave the body in urine, you'll be able to tell when you're in ketosis by taking a simple urine test that detects ketones. Initially, you'll undergo this test each week. After 8 to 10 weeks on the VLCD (or sometimes earlier) your body adapts to burning ketones for energy and fewer ketones are excreted in the urine. At that time, your urine tests may show only a trace of ketones or none at all.

Q. Why is protein important in a VLCD?

A. To help meet its energy needs, your body can use protein, either from dietary sources or from body tissues, like muscle and organs. Obviously, it's healthier to get the energy from the protein in the diet. Without the added protein from New Direction products, your body would break down its own muscle and organ tissues. Such a breakdown can result in serious health consequences, even death. You need to take in enough dietary protein to "spare" your muscles and organs.



Q. Aren't carbohydrates and fat also important?

A. Yes, both carbohydrates and fat are important in a VLCD, but present at lower levels than typically seen in moderately reduced-calorie diets. A minimal amount of carbohydrates is required to make energy for your cells which are unable to use ketones. Carbohydrates help spare protein and are also important to maintain electrolyte and fluid balance. A moderate amount of fat in a VLCD provides essential fatty acids, which are needed for good health.

Q. How much weight can I expect to lose?

A. That depends on several factors, including your current weight, age and sex. During the first week, an average weight loss of 4 to 7 pounds is common, with water loss accounting for many of these pounds. After the first week, the average rate of weight loss decreases to about 3 to 5 pounds per week. If you are losing weight too quickly, your New Direction physician may advise you to increase the number of beverages you are taking and/or to modify your exercise plan.

Q. What is covered during the group meetings?

A. The New Direction VLCD offers weekly group meetings that cover the following topics:

Behavior Modification. This component of the program helps you identify and change behaviors that led to overeating. You'll learn how to get support from others and deal with situations that could challenge your weight loss efforts. The Behavior modules, which you'll receive at your group meetings, will help reinforce what you learn each week.

Nutrition Education. Through discussions with staff and other group members, you'll learn how to make food choices that will help you manage your weight. Additionally, the Nutrition modules offer practical information on healthy eating and good nutrition, which is so important for weight management.

Exercise. The exercise component of the program helps you build physical activity into your day. With the support of your exercise specialist, you'll learn how regular physical activity can benefit your weight control efforts.

Q. What are the health benefits of a VLCD?

A. For individuals who are appropriate candidates for a VLCD, the resulting weight loss can improve medical conditions, such as diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

Q. What are the New Direction Products?

A. New Direction products are specially formulated to provide all of the protein, carbohydrate, fat and essential vitamins and minerals you need while on a VLCD. New Direction products—beverages, puddings, hot drink and soups—are offered in a variety of flavors.

Q. How many calories will I be consuming?

A. Most clients on a VLCD follow a 600 or 800 calorie reducing plan, depending on the protein needs for their ideal body weight. Three or four New Direction products provide enough protein/calories for most clients. It is important to consume the prescribed number each day. You won't lose weight faster by consuming fewer products. In fact, it could be dangerous to do so.

Q. Will I be hungry?

A. Most clients in the program report that their hunger lessens or disappears after the first few days on the diet. There are several theories as to why this may occur; however, there is no definitive reason. Some evidence suggests that ketones reduce the feeling of hunger. Others suggest that when dieters eat only one or two foods instead of a variety, their appetite may be diminished. It is also possible that high protein, low carbohydrate foods, such as New Direction products, may curb appetite.



Q. Are the beverages/soup lactose-free?

A. No. They contain about two grams of lactose per packet, compared to one cup of milk which contains about 12 grams of lactose. Most people who are lactose-intolerant can use the New Direction products without developing any gastrointestinal problems. However, if you are extremely sensitive to lactose, ask your dietitian how to use a lactase enzyme (e.g., Lactaid tablets).

Q. Are the beverages/soup caffeine free?

A. Only the chocolate-flavored beverages contain caffeine from the added cocoa powder. The chocolate and hot cocoa beverages contain 12 and 22 milligrams of caffeine, respectively. In comparison, a 5-ounce cup of brewed drip coffee contains 60 to 180 milligrams. The average 12-ounce diet cola soft drink contains 30 to 60 milligrams of caffeine.

Q. Do the New Direction products contain aspartame?

A. Some New Direction products contain aspartame. The level in each product varies, please speak with a New Direction staff member for details.

Q. Can I use the soups instead of the cold beverages or hot cocoa?

A. Because the New Direction soups contain more sodium than the other products, it is recommended that a maximum of two servings per day of the soup be used. The remaining daily product intake should be made up of one or two servings of the other flavors. If you are sensitive to salt, discuss the use of the soups with your dietitian.



Potential Side Effects from a VLCD

People on very low calorie diets sometimes experience mild, temporary side effects while their bodies adjust to this major change in diet. You may experience some, none or all of these:

Dizziness. During the first few days or weeks on the program, you may feel dizzy or light-headed at times. As you begin to lose weight, you lose a lot of water as urine, and this lowers the volume of blood. When blood volume drops, blood pressure drops, and blood sometimes doesn't reach the brain fast enough. As a result, when you sit down or stand up quickly, you feel dizzy.

If you feel dizzy or light-headed, avoid changing positions quickly. Don't use whirlpools, saunas and steam baths, because they can make it worse. Also, drink at least 1-1/2 to 2 quarts of water daily, in addition to the water you mix with the New Direction products. This amount of fluid helps keep your blood volume normal.

Fruity breath. You may notice that your breath has a fruity odor while you're consuming New Direction beverages. It results from ketosis and burning body fat for energy. If the odor bothers you, use a mouthwash. This side effect will probably subside as you continue the program.

Gastrointestinal upset. Some people develop diarrhea; some develop constipation. We know that the change from solid food to a liquid diet affects people in different ways. Both diarrhea and constipation respond to a variety of over-the-counter medications. If the condition doesn't clear up, inform your New Direction physician.

Gallstones. Obesity increases the risk of gallstones. Scientific studies have shown that nearly all significantly overweight people have some degree of gallbladder abnormality. Medical experts predict that up to half will develop symptoms of gallbladder disease, including upper abdominal discomfort, bloating, belching and intolerance to foods.

Rapid weight reduction can temporarily increase conditions that may lead to gallstones. However, these conditions are reduced if weight is lost and then maintained. It's essential that you inform the New Direction physician of symptoms or a history of gallstones; he/she may decide to perform additional tests or prescribe treatment. If you experience any symptoms during the Program, inform the New Direction staff immediately.

Other side effects. Less common side effects of a VLCD are fatigue, dry skin and sensitivity to cold. These side effects can be treated with extra rest, lotions and creams, and extra clothing. Some people also experience leg cramps and missed or late menstrual periods. These conditions should be evaluated by the New Direction physician. Leg cramps can often be relieved by drinking more fluid and getting more of certain minerals. Women who miss or have late menstrual periods should immediately be tested for pregnancy. Some women with irregular menstrual cycles may become regular while on the diet.

While most side effects occur early in the program, as the body begins to adjust to the diet, temporary hair loss is one side effect that can occur later. Very few people experience it, but it can be frustrating for those who do. This side effect usually occurs from 3 to 6 months after the Reducing Phase of the program begins. Only a small percentage of the hair follicles are affected, and hair loss doesn't occur in just one spot. It's also not permanent; in fact, new hair is likely to grow in as the old hair is lost. But there is no way to predict who will develop this side effect, nor is there a treatment other than time for hair to grow back. If you need more information, speak with your New Direction physician.



The Importance of Medical Supervision While on VLCD

Medical monitoring is essential while on the New Direction VLCD to ensure that you remain in good health as you lose weight. Also, by checking your physical responses to the diet, the staff can determine whether you need more New Direction servings or an electrolyte or mineral supplement.

Monitoring consists of a number of tests and examinations that are performed regularly. Every week, your weight and blood pressure will be measured. Your blood will be drawn at regular intervals to measure levels of minerals, cholesterol, triglycerides and other medical indicators. Occasionally, an electrocardiogram will be performed to check your heart.

Although these tests and examinations are intended mainly as safety measures, they also have motivational value. For example, if you have hypertension you may see your blood pressure drop as you lose weight and become more fit. You may also see improvements in your blood glucose and cholesterol levels. These positive changes provide incentives to stick with the New Direction VLCD.



Medications Appropriate for Use with the New Direction VLCD

For headaches:	Non-aspirin pain relievers, pain relievers containing ibuprofen (Motrin [®] , Advil [®]), pain relievers containing acetaminophen (Tylenol [®])
For colds:	Antihistamines
For constipation:	Sugar-free psyllium compounds (take with a lot of water), Milk of Magnesia [®] , Dulcolax [®] suppository, glycerin suppository.
For indigestion or heartburn:	Tums [®] , Mylanta [®] , Maalox [®] , Roloids [®] , Riopan [®]

Medications to Avoid While Using the New Direction VLCD

Aspirin and aspirin-containing compounds; cough and cold medications that contain alcohol, codeine, or sugar; amphetamines; general anesthetics; tranquilizers; any medication not reviewed and approved by your New Direction physician.

Guidelines for Losing Weight Safely

- Consume all of the New Direction servings prescribed for you. Consuming less than the prescribed amount will jeopardize your health.
- Attend all doctor appointments, laboratory screenings and Lifestyle Skills classes.
- Space your New Direction servings throughout the day. Have the beverages at the times you would ordinarily eat breakfast, lunch and dinner. If you're taking a fourth beverage, have it as a midmorning, mid afternoon or bedtime snack.
- Drink at least 1 1/2 to 2 quarts of water daily, in addition to the water you add to your packets of New Direction beverages. Plain tap or bottled water is best, but other liquids are acceptable if they contain few or no calories.
- Keep your carbohydrate intake at less than 10 grams a day (not including New Direction). Your dietitian can provide you with a select list of items and their related carbohydrate content.
- Don't cross your legs. When this is done, you compress a nerve at the back of the knee that can cause numbness in the lower part of the leg. This nerve becomes more exposed as you lose fat and is more sensitive to pressure.
- Take prescribed mineral or electrolyte supplements as ordered, if the New Direction physician prescribes them for you. Some participants may need supplements, as indicated by their blood tests.
- Use only prescribed or approved medications. Report any medications you're taking to the New Direction physician. Keep taking them, unless the doctor recommends a change. If the need for any over-the-counter drug arises, review the list of acceptable medications.
- Avoid taking extended trips during your first few months on the New Direction VLCD, since close monitoring is an essential part of the program. If you must be away from home, let the New Direction staff know so they can help you plan your diet.
- If you become seriously ill or are injured while you're on the New Direction VLCD, be sure to tell your primary care physician that you're on a VLCD or modified fast. The physician may need to reverse your state of ketosis so other medical treatments can be effective, or may want to contact the New Direction staff about the program.

