

## MyHCGPlus Mini-Guide – What if I Cheat?

It can happen to the best of us. Well-meaning family members bring tempting food in to our presence and encourage us, “just one bite won’t hurt.” The boss brings in warm, fresh, gooey doughnuts. The scale doesn’t move for a few days and suddenly that chocolate bar is looking mighty tempting. We cheat, fall off the wagon, eat off plan... and then we find ourselves asking, “What do I do after I’ve cheated on the HCG protocol?”

This mini-guide is meant to be a tool to help you navigate through the process after you cheat. There is good news and bad news when you cheat on the HCG protocol. The good news is that it isn’t a disaster that you can’t recover from... the bad news is that there are generally immediate consequences that you must be aware of and choices you must make to ensure that your remaining time on the HCG protocol leads to successful weight loss and stabilization.

### A few notes regarding the nature of cheats while on the HCG protocol:

- The nature of the protocol is that it is a treatment plan for obesity. This is a bit different than your typical diet where a cheat merely sets you back a few days and you can, “get back on the wagon” again.
- There really are no small cheats on the HCG protocol. Simply put, eating anything that is not on the original food list is considered a cheat. Regardless of what you have read online, “planned cheats” are not acceptable and the use of coconut oil or macadamia nuts while on the VLCD is considered as much of a cheat as eating a slice of cheesecake.
- *Pounds and Inches* is very clear that deviations from the protocol, especially while on the VLCD, have immediate consequences. From *Pounds and Inches*:

*Few patients will take one's word for it that the slightest deviation from the diet has under HCG disastrous results as far as the weight is concerned. This extreme sensitivity has the advantage that the smallest error is immediately detectable at the daily weighing but most patients have to make the experience before they will believe it. – Pages 32/33*

*Even seemingly insignificant deviations, particularly those that at first sight seem to be an improvement, are very liable to produce most disappointing results and even annul the effect (of the treatment) completely. – Page 24*

- It isn’t just VLCD cheats that can cause trouble with stabilization and long term success – cheats on M1 can have equally disastrous effects. Sometimes the effects of a cheat are not immediately apparent – perhaps a smaller cheat on VLCD isn’t met with immediate rapid weight gain, but it causes trouble stabilizing during maintenance.
- Cheating on the HCG Protocol is NEVER worth it.

## What can I expect after a cheat?

- Immediate gain on the scale of a few pounds – even if the cheat was very small. While under the influence of the HCG, your blood volume has adapted to the restricted food intake and eating anything outside of those parameters can cause huge spikes. Don't expect a cheat of three potato chips to not have a big consequence – it is entirely possible that a cheat as small as that can induce a gain of a few pounds the next day.
- It may take a little while for your body to recover from the cheat – stalls are very common after a cheat and may last longer than naturally occurring plateaus.
- After a cheat, you may notice cravings for sugary and starchy foods are increased or that you experience similar “detox” symptoms such as headache, irritability, etc., all over again. All of this is normal and will pass in a few days. The most important thing if you experience these is to push through and not cheat again – another cheat will only prolong these symptoms.
- If the cheat was on M1, you may notice a large increase on the scale that puts you more than two pounds over your LDW and a steak day may or may not correct it. If the cheat was missing a steak day, you may find that it is very difficult to get back down in to the safe range and that your body may end up stabilizing at a new (higher) weight.
- You likely will experience some guilt and panic. Stress regarding a cheat often snowballs and the mental aspect of recovering from a cheat is just as important as the physical.

## What do I need to do to get back “on plan” after a cheat on VLCD?

1. **Forgive and examine:** Admit that you made a mistake and forgive yourself. Release yourself from “feeling bad” and beating yourself up over the cheat. Use this as an opportunity to examine your beliefs about food, and yourself. Why did you cheat – what triggered it? How can you avoid that in the future? Journaling can help with this process.
2. **Get 21 cheat-free days in before moving on:** Pounds and Inches makes it clear that one needs 21 cheat-free days on the VLCD to ensure a proper reset of the hypothalamus. These days do not need to be consecutive. Ensure that you have a total of 21 cheat free days before moving in to Maintenance 1.
3. **Recommit and Move Forward:** Recommit to the protocol and your goals. You are worth it! Start back on the VLCD immediately and commit to staying cheat free for the rest of your round. Stay off the scale for a few days and move forward. You're going to be just fine.

## What do I need to do to get back on the road to stabilization after a cheat in Maintenance 1?

1. **Forgive and examine:** Admit that you made a mistake and forgive yourself. Release yourself from “feeling bad” and beating yourself up over the cheat. Use this as an opportunity to examine your beliefs about food, and yourself. Why did you cheat – what triggered it? How can you avoid that in the future? Journaling can help with this process. Maintenance is a perfect time to solidify new and healthy habits in to your life.
2. **Eat Clean:** Go back to Day 1, Week 1 of M1. This means eating your BMR + Activity level of recommended calories, with no caution foods. Continue eating this way until you have completed one full week without a steak day.
3. **Be patient with yourself and your body:** It may take some time and diligence, but you should be able to stabilize your weight if you commit to the process. You’re going to do just fine!

### Final Thoughts:

As you can see, cheats on the HCG Protocol have serious consequences and require diligence to correct. The good news is that a single cheat is not going to undo all of the work you have done on the protocol.

If, however, you find yourself cheating over and over again (more than twice in one round), you may want to seriously consider if this treatment plan is the best way for you to reach your weight loss goals. There are other wonderful plans that have more flexibility than the HCG protocol and perhaps at this time, they would be a better choice for you and your goals.

You are worth it! Keep on keeping on – success is closer than you think!