



## SHAPE Program FAQs

### **Won't I lose weight on 500 calories without the hCG?**

Yes, people who only consume 500 calories will lose weight, but typically it will be due to muscle breakdown, which is counterproductive because the body will rebuild the muscle when the calories increase, so any weight lost will be regained. In addition, without the benefit of the hCG, a person consuming only 500 calories will be very hungry, tired, irritable, have a foggy brain and look gaunt.

### **Is it safe?**

The hCG diet is very safe. This diet was first introduced by Dr. A. T. Simeons in the 1950s; hundreds of thousands of people have completed it without complication. hCG, which stands for human chorionic gonadotropin, is a natural hormone produced in very large amounts by pregnant women. During the diet, the amount of hCG taken is very small and it is only taken for a limited amount of time.

During the diet people eat only healthy, natural foods - they do not eat processed, low calorie, and low nutritional value foods as in many other diet programs. Additionally, patients do not take appetite suppressant drugs which can be dangerous, and which only lead to muscle breakdown which is counterproductive to permanent weight loss.

### **During SHAPE - Phase One**

#### **I am hungry, what should I do?**

Hunger may occur in the first few days if the feasting phase was not completed adequately. After that, true hunger is not normal and usually indicates that either the patient has not been compliant (and has eaten more than 500 calories) or has a higher requirement for hCG and should **call the office** for instructions on what to do. Sometimes patients are not really hungry; they are just stressed or bored and looking for sensory stimulation.

#### **I am tired, what should I do?**

Fatigue due to hypoglycemia is not normal. When a patient is compliant with the diet and taking the correct dose of hCG, the body will breakdown excess fat for energy – as much as 3,000 calories! Fatigue should not occur unless a person is exercising very vigorously. Other causes of fatigue such as hypothyroidism, insomnia or stress may be responsible and can be investigated further. **Call the office!**



### **I have not lost any weight in 3 days, what should I do?**

When patients stop losing weight by the reading on their scale it is called a “plateau”. In fact, there is no way an individual cannot lose weight on 500 calories per day. Nonetheless, plateaus do occasionally occur. Frequently, the cause is non-compliance: the patient is consuming more than 500 calories. Other explanations are premenstrual fluid retention and constipation. Occasionally, patients apply skin creams that contain oils. In rare instances, this can slow weight loss.

When the patient is truly compliant, and is not about to have her period, we generally recommend “**an apple day**” where the patient consumes **ONLY 6 ideally green apples** (plus liquids) during the entire day. Typically, the next day the patient will report that they have lost one or more pounds.

### **Can I eat a little more than 500 calories?**

**NO!** The body has to be fooled into thinking that a real starvation situation is occurring. By consuming more than 500 calories, the body senses only an under-eating situation and the hCG does not cause the body to break down excess fat. The result is: muscle loss, hunger, fatigue, and irritability.

### **Can I mix vegetables in a salad?**

The short answer is “**NO!**” Some patients are able to mix vegetables and still lose fat, others have to follow the diet exactly with no mixing of vegetables in order to be successful. Start the diet exactly, after a week of successful weight loss, after that if one wishes to experiment, then try combining vegetables (only after being successful). If the weight loss slows, go back to not mixing vegetables at the same meal.

### **Can I exercise?**

Yes! Due to the hCG you are consuming around 3500 calories daily (500 from your food intake plus 3000 from fat breakdown.). This is more than enough energy to exercise moderately without getting hypoglycemic. For those who have not exercised recently, we do recommend 30 minutes of brisk walking 5 days per week but not more until a greater level of fitness is attained. Please consult with Dr. Clair or your primary care physician before starting any new exercise program.

### **I have reached my weight loss goal, but I still have more hCG, what should I do?**

Continue the hCG for at least 21 days, but increase your calories to at least 1500 calories per day. The weight loss will stop or slow and you will get ready for Phase Two.



**After my initial thyroid evaluation, I was started on thyroid supplementation, do I continue that after the program is finished?**

Yes. The thyroid supplementation should be continued after the diet, probably indefinitely as thyroid hormone is important not only for helping us lose weight but also maintain a healthy weight as well as decrease our risk of many chronic diseases. Dr. Clair can continue to help you with this after the diet if you wish or you may consult with your regular doctor.

**I am a vegetarian. Can I still do the diet?**

Yes. Many vegetarians eat eggs occasionally and they can consume 3 egg whites as their protein. Alternatively, some nonfat cottage cheese can be substituted. Finally, tofu or tempeh are soy-based sources of protein that are allowed during the diet. Please consult with our nurse for further ideas.

**Can I still take my vitamins?**

Yes. In fact, the SHAPE Program includes a 30 day supply of a high quality vitamin/mineral supplement to get you started because during Phase One you are on a very limited diet, and therefore are not able to get all of the vitamins and minerals your body needs. It is recommended that you continue with vitamin/mineral supplementation on Phase Two and after. ***However, please do not take large amounts of fish or other omega-3 oils.***

**Should I keep taking my medicines?**

Yes. Patients should continue to take their regularly prescribed medicines. Patients taking blood pressure medicine may find that as they lose weight their blood pressure is lower and they may need to adjust their dosage but only with the knowledge and under the supervision of the physician who prescribed the medication. Similarly, diabetics may find their need for medication to control their blood sugar may be less. These individuals are strongly advised to speak to their primary care physician before making any changes to their medication regimen.

**I am diabetic, can I do the diet?**

Yes. Many diabetics have successfully completed the SHAPE program. It is very important though that diabetics check their blood sugar levels daily or even more frequently when appropriate.

**I have more than 40 lbs. to lose, can I take the hCG for more than 6 weeks?**

No. After six weeks the body starts to become less sensitive to hCG and any further weight loss is usually due to muscle breakdown. However, if a patient desires to lose additional weight they can re-start SHAPE after a 6 week period off of hCG.



### **I have not had a bowel movement in a few days, what should I do?**

It is not uncommon to become constipated during Phase One of SHAPE. Be sure to drink enough water (at least 2 liters per day) and get some exercise. If you are still constipated, we recommend a gentle herbal laxative such as *Smooth Move*® tea. Additionally, you may find extra fiber supplement such as psyllium husk to be helpful.

### **Can I have almond milk?**

We recommend that you only drink water, tea or coffee. You can use one tablespoon of nonfat milk or almond milk in your coffee.

### **Can I chew gum?**

We do not recommend it, but you may chew gum as long as it is only sweetened with xylitol (no artificial sweeteners or sugar are allowed.)

### **Can you explain the difference between the 6 week and the 9 week SHAPE program?**

During the 6 week program patients take the hCG injections daily for 3 weeks followed by 3 weeks of Phase Two. (Typical fat loss during this program is 10-15 lbs.) During the 9 week program patients take the hCG injections for 6 weeks followed by 3 weeks of Phase 2. (People will typically lose 20-30 lbs of fat in the 9 week program.)

## **During the diet - Phase Two**

### **When do I start Phase Two?**

Phase Two begins the first day after you stop the hCG injections (day 22 for a six week program and day 43 for a nine-week program,) however, ***for the first two days of Phase Two, you will remain on the 500 calorie diet.*** This is because the hCG will remain in your system for 2 days after your last injection. You should not be hungry or tired because you still have hCG in your system breaking down excess fat for energy. On day 3 of Phase Two, you will begin the higher calorie "metabolism re-set" phase.

### **Why is Phase Two important?**

During Phase Two you will be re-setting your metabolism. This is critical to make any fat loss that you have accomplished during Phase One permanent and so that you do not regain any weight.



### **Can I eat anything I want?**

No. During Phase Two you will consume the same foods as Phase One, only in larger quantities. After phase 2 you can slowly re-introduce other foods into your diet. As long as the total calories per day is not above your new set point you will not gain weight.

### **How much should I eat during Phase Two?**

Typically, women should eat at least 2200 calories per day and men at least 2500 calories per day. Whatever number of calories you decide to consume for the 3 weeks of Phase Two will become your new daily requirement (besides calories needed for exercise). It is important to set the “bar” high enough in calories during this period so that you are comfortable after completion with the amount you can eat and not gain weight.

### **Won't I gain weight?**

No. If you stick to eating the fruits, vegetables, and lean protein selections from Phase One, you will not gain weight.

### **I am on Phase Two and I gained 2 lbs. what should I do?**

If you gain more than 2 lbs. on Phase Two, contact the nurse and she will recommend doing a “steak day,” which consists of Phase One breakfast & lunch and only a 5 ounce steak for dinner (no vegetables or fruits with dinner.)

### **After the SHAPE program**

#### **Can I eat anything I want now?**

Yes, technically there are no restricted foods, but you will want to introduce new foods slowly. Keep in mind the total calories that you are eating compared to the daily “set point” you established during Phase Two. You may find that your “favorite foods” have changed and that those foods you used to love now may leave you feeling heavy and sluggish and the few minutes of taste pleasure are not worth the hours of “blah” or worse.

#### **After the SHAPE program is over, what other type of support do you have?**

Our patients are always welcome to participate in any of our other health enhancing programs. A complete listing is available on our website. In addition, we do recommend patients continue their vitamin supplementation with our Day Packs to ensure they are getting all the vitamins and minerals they need to maintain optimal health.

#### **How important is continuing to take the vitamin supplements that I took during the SHAPE program?**

Very! It is very difficult to get all the vitamins and minerals we need in these stress-filled, busy times even if we do eat locally grown, organic food (which many of us do not have access to on a regular basis) so we recommend staying on the Day Packs which contain healthy amounts of pharmaceutical grade, well absorbed vitamins, minerals and other nutraceuticals.

If you have questions, please call the nurse! (805) 379-0254



**How do I refer someone to the program who I think could benefit?**

We appreciate all referrals. Please have them call our office at (805) 379-0254.

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