

## Dear Diary

Diet-tracking works for some as weight-loss technique, can lead to obsession for others

By **Stephanie Goldberg**  
THE STATE NEWS

It can be done mentally, in a journal or on a computer, but what does diet tracking really bring to the table? Interactive Web sites — such as [My-Calorie-Counter.com](http://My-Calorie-Counter.com) — have taken the art of diet-tracking to a new level by eliminating the need for pens, paper, calculators and even dietitians. However, experts disagree as to whether online diet journals and diet tracking in general, provides a healthy way to maintain or lose weight.

“(Diet trackers) have been around for a long time,” said Ronda Bokram, a registered dietitian at Olin Health Center. “Whether it’s electronically, or going to a group and getting materials to do the same thing, or going to the library or the book store, there has been a way to record your intake and monitor it ever since the (onset) of dieting.”

It’s easy to see why students are drawn to free, online diet trackers, Bokram said, but the programs are more trouble than they’re worth.

“I rarely use food records or journaling with students because it becomes an obsessive thing and stops students from intuitively eating,” she said. “If you start someone on a path of counting calories, depending on who it is, they can become obsessed and can’t get the calculator out of their heads.”

Food labels exist to help people get a variety of nutrients in their diet and avoid eating an ingredient they shouldn’t consume for whatever reason — not to restrict their intake, which is the reason why many students who count calories pay attention to labels to begin with, Bokram said.

Nutritional science freshman Danielle Naida said for her, self monitoring is the best way to maintain a healthy diet.

“Last year, I wrote down what I was eating a little bit, but it’s hard now with busy schedules and stuff,” Naida said. “I would bring my lunch to school a lot so the calories and nutritional facts were right on the labels, but here when you go to the caf with different portions and stuff you can’t pay attention as easy.”

Naida’s immediate future might not include a food diary, but she said if she ever decides to lose a little weight she would definitely go back to logging her food intake.

Unlike Naida, Nikki Zielinski

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### IN THE KNOW Hide your journal

Sometimes, writing in a diary or journal is the only way to release your thoughts and feelings. Those feelings and thoughts can be very personal at times, so the risk of someone reading it is not an option. Here are some tips on how to hide your diary or journal and avoid awkward, uncomfortable or humiliating discoveries by an someone else.

— Kara Pallokas, *The State News*

#### Ways to hide your diary/journal



**Avoid the typical** hiding spots where most people would know to look, such as: The top shelf or your closet, in your pillowcase or in your underwear drawer.



**Put your diary/journal** inside a desktop computer. Most computers have lots of empty space inside the case. Just be sure not to store it somewhere where it will damage your computer, start a fire or block airflow to components that need cooling.



**Make a hollow book** and put your diary/journal inside.



**Stick your diary/journal** behind a framed picture on the wall.

**For the complete list,** visit [stateneews.com](http://stateneews.com).

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