

POTENTIAL SYMPTOMS AND SIDE EFFECTS

Leg Cramps

Some individuals may experience leg cramps on the program. If you are on medications you will want to have these monitored and adjusted accordingly throughout your weight loss program.

- Try taking a bouillon or a Medifast Fast Soup to help.
- Make sure to keep well hydrated
- Do not arbitrarily add potassium to your program without first consulting with your doctor. You will want to have labs done to determine how much (if any) potassium should be added. Adding inappropriate amounts of potassium can potentially affect heart rhythms.

Dizziness, lightheadedness, fatigue

- If you feel dizzy, lightheaded, or extra tired, try having a Medifast Fast Soup or a bouillon
- Make sure to keep well hydrated and have medications monitored while doing the program.
- Please contact your physician if you are experiencing any of these symptoms after your first week on the program.

Women's Issues

Rapid weight loss may cause an increase in the level of estrogen in the bloodstream. This in turn may possibly affect menstrual cycle regularity, change PMS symptoms, and/or increase fertility. Please contact your Ob-Gyn if you have any concerns or questions.

Headache

Individuals may experience a headache at the onset of the program. This is a result of getting into the fat-burning state.

- Tylenol or aspirin can help relieve pain symptoms
- Make sure to get in at least 64-ounces of water
- You should not experience a headache beyond Week 1 of the program

Loose Skin

Some individuals may experience loose skin on the program (due to rapid weight loss). Incorporating exercise into the program can help improve muscle tone. Just make sure to start slowly and gradually increase time and intensity (see the topic, "Exercising on Medifast" in our FAQ section).

- Some individuals may require plastic surgery to help with loose skin.

Feeling Cold

Some individuals may feel cold on the program – a result of the lower caloric intake. Try a Medifast hot product, and make sure to carry around a sweater or jacket.

Hair Loss

Some individuals may experience hair loss on the program. It does not happen to all individuals. Increase your fluid intake, making sure to get at least 64 ounces of water a day. You may want to incorporate one of the following to help with hair loss:

- Biotin (a vitamin B complex)
- fish oil
- flaxseed oil
- 1-2 tbsp of canola or olive oil

Rash

Some individuals may experience a rash, perhaps due to one of the following:

1. an allergy to an ingredient in the products, or
2. the increased consumption of protein

Benadryl or Cortisone cream may help get rid of the rash. If the rash persists, it is likely due to an allergy – and use of the contributing products should be discontinued in this case.

Gas

Some individuals may experience gas on the program. Generally this will go away after incorporating an antacid such as Roloids or Tums.

- Gas can sometimes result from a change in diet
- Certain individuals may experience gas due to lactose intolerance. If an individual is lactose intolerant, Lactaid may be incorporated along with the program. Don't forget our lactose-free products and our dairy-free Ready-to-Drink shakes!

Diarrhea

Some individuals may experience diarrhea on the program. Incorporating Imodium can help get rid of the diarrhea. If the diarrhea persists, Medifast recommends discontinuing the product. Constant diarrhea can affect your electrolyte balance.

- Diarrhea may result from a change in diet, sometimes due to the higher consumption of greens. Imodium should help in this instance
- Diarrhea may coincide with lactose intolerance. If an individual is lactose intolerant, Lactaid may be incorporated along with the program. Don't forget our lactose-free products and our dairy-free Ready-to-Drink shakes!

Bad Breath

Some individuals may complain of bad breath or a funny taste in their mouth (usually referred to as a sweet or metallic taste). This is a result of being in the fat-burning state.

- Individuals can use up to 5 pieces of either sugar-free gum or mints to help get rid of the taste
- Sugar-free Listerine strips may help
- Make sure to brush teeth well

Constipation

Some individuals experience constipation on the program. This can result from lower food intake amounts.

- You can use sugar-free Benefiber to help relieve the constipation
- You may try stool softeners
- Try incorporating 1-2 tbsp of canola or olive oil into your diet

If these tips do not work, please consult with your physician.

Hunger that doesn't go away?

If you continue to struggle with hunger beyond the first week or two, your stomach may be excreting more acid than needed for the small volume of food intake. This can create a "gnawing" sensation in your stomach that feels exactly like hunger. If you have a history of having an ulcer or gastritis, you can be particularly prone to this type of hunger problem.

To manage hunger that won't go away, consider taking an acid-blocker medication such as Zantac®, Tagamet® or Pepcid AC®. You will find these in most drug stores or grocery stores – usually in the same location as antacids.

Can I continue with Medifast if I catch a cold or get the flu?

If you catch a cold or get the flu, you can stay on Medifast provided your symptoms aren't too severe. Taking antibiotics (if necessary) won't harm your Medifast Plan, but they may temporarily slow your weight loss. Be sure to use sugar-free cough and cold medications – so that your body remains in its fat-burning state.

*NOTE: While temporary side effects are a possibility when on the Medifast program, most people do not experience them. If you have any questions, please contact Nutrition Support via email nutritionsupport@medifastdiet.com or by telephone: (800) 509-1281.

MANAGING MUSCLE CRAMPS

If you experience muscle cramps while you're on the Medifast Program, several strategies can help.

- First, avoid getting dehydrated. Make sure that you're drinking enough water, especially while exercising.
- Second, review your medications with your physician. If you're taking high blood pressure medicine or a "water pill," he or she may adjust your dosage.
- Third, consider choosing Medifast Meals and Lean & Green Meal selections that are higher in sodium, calcium, and potassium (minerals essential to normal muscle function). Here are some examples:

Medifast Meals:

	Potassium (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Calcium (mg)
55 & 70 Shakes	>400	≥250	250 – 300
Chicken Noodle Soup	620	350	300
Chicken & Wild Rice Soup	430	320	300
Homestyle Chili	490	240	250
Maryland Crab Soup	470	390	450
Chocolate Pudding	480	170	350

Vegetables: Broccoli, spinach, celery, tomatoes, turnip greens, collard greens, summer squash, or kohlrabi

Healthy fat: Green olives

Optional snack: Bouillon or dill pickle spears

Beverage: Sugar-free tonic water that contains quinine (quinine helps ease muscle cramps)

NOTE: Medifast does NOT recommend use of over-the-counter potassium supplements without physician supervision.

Preventing nighttime leg cramps:

- Stretch your calf muscles before going to bed. Press your toes against a wall, hold for 30 seconds, relax, and repeat.
- Keep blankets and sheets loose at the foot of the bed to keep your toes from pointing downward while you sleep.
- Consider taking a calcium supplement before bed.
- If you get a cramp in your calf, flex your foot up (toes toward your head) and hold until the cramp stops. Apply heat to the affected area, or massage.

Preventing cramps when you exercise

- Stretch and warm up for 10 to 15 minutes before exercising.
- Don't overdo your exercise: 30 to 45 minutes is adequate when you're in the weight-loss phase of the Medifast Program.
- Drink plenty of water. Excessive perspiration can cause you to lose sodium and potassium, resulting in a cramp.
- Don't exercise on a full stomach.