

## Shamala Ratnesar, dietitian and author of *The Omega-3 Diet Revolution*

### What prompted you to become a dietitian?

I have always been interested in health, and biology was one of my favourite subjects in school. I also love food – so becoming a dietitian was the perfect way to blend all these elements together.

### Have you always had a passion for nutrition?

Yes. From the time I was a teenager, I have been interested in health and nutrition.

### In your opinion, what do you think are the biggest mistakes women make when it comes to diet?

It really concerns me that many women go on crash diets in an attempt to lose weight too rapidly. I am also deeply concerned with the fad diets that many women follow. These fad diets

don't have any scientific basis to them and the most alarming ones are the very low-carbohydrate diets that have become popular in recent times. They actually compromise a person's long-term health. There is no point in losing weight in the short-term only to have a heart attack or develop cancer in the long-term.

### What sort of a diet plan do you follow?

I follow my own diet. I believe that omega-3s are vital to our health and well-being. One of my key guidelines is to have some form of fish/seafood/omega-3 eggs every day. My diet includes a variety of delicious foods like strawberries, mangoes, tasty chicken dishes and even cakes.

### How has your attitude to diet changed over the years?

I have perhaps become more practical, as I know that people want simple yet effective guidelines that can fit into our busy lives.

### What do you think the key is to healthy weight-loss and maintenance?

There are several factors here. The first thing to do is to think in terms of a healthy eating plan and regular exercise for life – rather than a short-term fad diet. Secondly, eating regularly and ensuring you have two-to-three serves of carbohydrates at each meal (carbohydrate foods include breads and cereals, fruit and milk). Thirdly, it is about enjoying good food. Fourthly, it is being happy and having a positive attitude to life. Finally, we need to eat plenty of omega-3 fatty acids to optimise our health and wellbeing.



### On the menu

**Breakfast:** 1 cup of coffee with low-fat lactose-reduced milk, 1 poached omega-3 egg (on some days), 1 small bowl Special K® Just Right® or Vita Brits (with wheat germ), about ½ cup low-fat lactose free milk or low-fat flavoured yogurt.

**Morning tea:** 1 tub (200g) of low-fat flavoured yogurt or a piece of fruit.

**Lunch:** 2 slices of wholemeal bread with a very thin spread of canola margarine, filled with about 60-to-80g of lean chicken/salmon/tuna/two omega-3 eggs. Salad vegetables such as shredded lettuce, grated carrot and sliced tomato. Low-fat mayonnaise for flavouring.

**Afternoon tea:** 1 cup of coffee made with low-fat lactose-free milk. 1 piece of fruit or a fruit bun or fruit smoothie.

**Dinner:** Salmon fillet/salmon cakes/chicken dish. Large tossed salad or steamed vegetables drizzled with 1 teaspoon canola or olive oil. \*