

# App Can Help Patients with Diabetes Achieve Better Health

REVIEWED BY ROBIN BRADLEY HANSEL, PT

**IF YOU TREAT DIABETIC PATIENTS**, you may wish to consider sharing the free GoMeals app by Sanofi-Aventis US LLC. It can be an empowering way to effectively monitor their caloric intake and blood glucose along with the daily activity levels you recommend within their PT programs. Utilizing the “Compendium of Physical Activities” in order to assess energy expenditure, this app helps physical therapists identify just how much daily exercise their diabetic patients may actually require for effective management of their disease process.

This app is currently available for iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad and Android devices. All versions offer Cloud syncing and work with the popular Fitbit technology.

Users are encouraged to initially set up a profile account in GoMeals to take advantage of syncing their data across multiple devices. After inputting height, gender and weight, app users also have the option of linking their Facebook or Twitter accounts should they wish to share their progress socially.

Information such as the time your day begins and what your calorie intake goals might be are then noted. Following this, users set up personal activity goals such as the number of

calories they seek to burn and daily activity duration goals. The physical therapist could use this particular segment as an opportunity to guide patients toward slightly more challenging avenues of safe exercise. Diabetic patients may then enter their target ranges for blood glucose, including hyper and hypo limits as well as their typical daily testing schedule.

Next, users are encouraged to record each meal they eat by browsing an extensive and highly customizable food listing powered by CalorieKing. Generic or name brand selections from grocery stores and restaurants are available. For dinner one evening, I selected a burrito bowl from Chipotle. Every component was already archived in the Chipotle-specific list including cilantro-lime rice, green tomatillo salsa, pinto beans and guacamole. I simply selected each component and then tried to be honest about my serving size (especially difficult in regard to the guacamole!).

The next morning, I repeated the process with a more generic breakfast selection of Greek yogurt, granola and almonds. I was shocked to find that 450 calories of my recommended 2000 per day diet were exhausted by my first meal. Needless to say, my lunch was



quickly scaled back to chicken noodle soup and saltine crackers for just 280 calories.

Activity-level selection came next, and again the pre-loaded listing was impressive. Exercises were categorized by “strength,” “cardio” and “other.” Fifty-six different types of walking activities were available from “bird watching” to “climbing hills with a 42-plus-pound load.” I picked “walking the dog” for an hour, which fell under the category of “other.” The app estimated this was equal to only 204 calories burned, which would barely offset my soup, presenting yet another reason for me to limit the guacamole and get much more active.

Since I’m not diabetic, I consulted the American Diabetes Association website for blood-glucose level ranges pre- and post-meals and entered them for the purposes of this app review. Results were easy to interpret and the graphics were colorful and visually stimulating.

I definitely recommend GoMeals as an effective teaching tool for diabetic patients of all ages, particularly regarding the relationship between physical activity and meal selection in terms of blood-glucose levels. This practical information and valuable feedback could easily become part of a patient’s daily routine with the encouragement of a physical therapist and supportive family members. Non-diabetic individuals will benefit from this app as well to help monitor their daily caloric intake, particularly when eating out, in order to lose, maintain or gain weight. ■

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## GoMeals by Sanofi-Aventis US LLC

RATING OF FUNCTION FOR PHYSICAL THERAPISTS	NUMBER OF STARS OUT OF 5
Ease of Use	****
Relevance to PT	**
Frequency of Projected Use	***
Potential for Upgrade with Improvements	***
Usefulness for Therapeutic Intervention	***
Accuracy	****

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