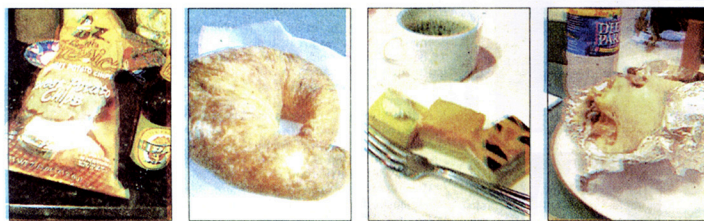


HEALTH

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The Camera Phone Diet



PHOTOS BY ROB PEGORARO—THE WASHINGTON POST

For two weeks, the author used a camera phone to record everything he ate and sent the images to a dietitian for feedback. Her advice: Can the soda, kill the croissant. Since you were about to ask: The last picture on the bottom row is a half-eaten burrito.

By ROB PEGORARO
Washington Post Staff Writer

For half of March, I engaged in a new ritual before each meal. I'd flip open a cell phone, turn on its camera and discreetly snap a picture. Then I'd e-mail it to a stranger.

I was testing a new dieting service called MyFoodPhone, which uses camera phones to document subscribers' intake, then e-mail the results to dietitians for analysis and advice. This service aims to avoid the hassle of jotting down what you ate, then conveying those records to a dietitian later on.

But my first thoughts weren't about saving paperwork, they were about my fear of getting caught. I worried that somebody would notice my clandestine culinary photojournalism, with the inevitably incredulous reaction, "Did you just . . . take a picture of your food?"

I need not have worried. Once I turned off the camera-shutter sound effect on the Sprint phone that MyFoodPhone loaned for the test, my picture-taking looked like any other form of wireless rudeness. As far as anybody could tell, I was just reading text messages or looking up baseball scores at

the dinner table.

MyFoodPhone subscribers begin by answering a questionnaire at the Web site of the Quebec City-based firm, <https://www.myfoodphone.com>, which includes both questions anybody should be able to answer (weight, height, exercise habits) and others that assume you've had a recent physical exam (cholesterol and glucose levels).

The system then assigns the subscriber a dietitian, who will look at each photo and offer comments on a

See PICTURE, Page F4

