

Healthy Eating Tip of the Month

October's Topic is Fad Diets!



More and more people are becoming overweight and obese in this nation. Because of this, many doctors recommend that their patients lose some weight to improve health and overall well-being.

But, how exactly is one supposed to lose weight?

Thousands of people are currently on some type of diet and many more have probably tried a fad diet in the past. Have you ever tried a fad diet or are you currently on one? Occasionally they work, but more times than not, the weight that was lost is regained. Read on to find out why fad diets may not work and for tips on how to lose weight in a safe and healthy manner.

What is a fad diet?

A fad diet is a diet that guarantees quick weight loss which usually does not last over the long-run. Weight loss can usually be attributed to fluid loss and comes right back as soon as the diet is stopped. Often, these diets advise people to avoid specific foods or replace meals with supplements. These diets may be lacking in many essential nutrients that the body needs to remain healthy. In the end, the diet may be more harmful to the body than beneficial.





Characteristics of a fad diet:

- 1) Only lasts for a short period of time - 2 weeks to 6 months.
- 2) There is no scientific reasoning for why the diet works. There may only be one research study that supports the diet.
- 3) The diet sounds too good to be true.
- 4) Eliminates some foods or uses supplements instead of foods.
- 5) Characterizes some foods as "bad."
- 6) Only allows you to eat at certain times of the day.
- 7) Seems impractical.
- 8) Guarantees weight loss without exercise or cutting back on calories.
- 9) Doesn't focus on lifestyle changes.
- 10) Claims it is the best new diet.



What are some popular fad diets?

➤ Low Carbohydrate Diets-

This type of diet includes the Atkin's and South Beach diets. They require consuming very little carbohydrates while consuming more fat and protein. It is generally recommended that at least 130 grams of carbohydrate are consumed on a daily basis to provide the body with an optimal energy source. When the body runs out of carbohydrates as an energy source, fat begins to be metabolized for energy. Byproducts of fat metabolism are ketones, which are harmful to the body. When there are excess ketones in the body dehydration, gout, low blood pressure, electrolyte imbalances, and possibly kidney and liver damage can occur.

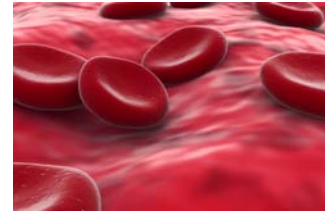


➤ **The Zone Diet-**

This is a diet that requires 40% of calories from carbohydrate, 30% from protein, and 30% from fat. The zone diet basically works by limiting caloric intake to around 1,000-1,600 calories per day. Obviously if you are limiting how much you eat, you are going to lose weight. This diet can also put the body in a state of ketosis.

➤ **The Blood Type Diet-**

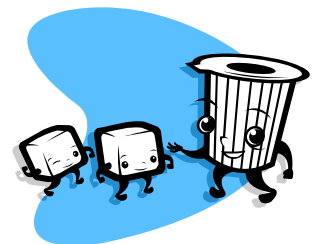
This diet is based on a person's blood type. It recommends that people with type A blood eat a diet consisting of lots of fruits and vegetables, while avoiding dairy, animal fats, and meats.



People with type B blood are advised to balance their diet between plant and animal proteins. Lastly, people with type O blood are advised to eat meats, fruits, and vegetables. There is no solid research to support this diet. Furthermore, the diet recommends some foods groups over others, which takes away from the idea of eating nutritionally balanced meals. Studies have shown that the only people to lose weight from this diet are people with type O blood and this could just be because it is lower in carbohydrates.

➤ **Sugar Buster's Diet-**

When following this diet, people avoid refined sugars and foods that raise blood sugar quickly. These types of foods include sweets, white breads, white rice, pasta, and potatoes. The theory behind this diet is that when a person eats these types of foods, their blood sugar spikes and is then followed by a drop in blood sugar, which is purported to make someone hungrier. By avoiding these types of foods, the authors claim that one will not get a hungry feeling and therefore not eat. This diet also requires 30% calories from carbohydrates, 30% from protein, and 40% from fat. Again, the main reason people lose weight is because it is lower in calories. It is also lower in carbohydrates which can put you at risk for ketosis. Most people are not able to follow this diet for a long period of time due to the types of foods and the way the calories are divided up.



➤ **Other popular fad diets-**

Raw food diet, three hour diet, detox diets, all liquid diets, cabbage soup diet, the cookie diet, and meal replacement diets.

What are some guidelines for determining whether a diet is a fad diet or not?

Answer the following questions:

- 1) Is there a registered dietitian involved in the diet?
- 2) Does it promise weight loss of 1-2 pounds per week?
- 3) Does it allow you eat foods from all of the food groups? (fruits, vegetables, starches/grains, protein, and dairy)
- 4) Does it encourage permanent behavior change and exercise?



****If you answered yes to all four questions above, then your diet meets the criteria for safe and healthy weight loss.**



****If you answer yes to the questions below, then your diet is a fad diet and it is not the best way to lose weight and keep it off.**



- 1) Does it promise quick weight loss of 3 or more pounds weekly?
- 2) Does it tell you to never eat certain foods?

3) Does it suggest you buy supplements to make up for what the diet is missing?

The key to weight loss is healthy food choices and exercise!

DIET:

-Try to eat 3 meals a day and avoid skipping breakfast



-Choose foods from all the food groups

-Include a variety of fruits and vegetables

-Emphasize whole grains - whole wheat breads, pastas, brown rice, and crackers

-Consume low-fat dairy products - 1% or skim milk, reduced fat cheeses, low fat cottage cheese and nonfat yogurt

-Focus on protein such as lean meat, poultry, fish, legumes, eggs, nuts and soy or other meat alternatives

-Look at food labels for fat content - foods low in saturated fat and without trans fats are most desirable

-Eat Slowly. It takes the brain at least 20 minutes to register that the stomach is full.

-Make sure to chew foods thoroughly

-Try taking sips of water between bites

-Set the silverware down between bites



-Watch your portion sizes! When eating out, consider splitting the meal, ordering a half portion, or taking half of the meal home. When eating at home, use smaller plates and bowls - it's amazing how our mind can play tricks on us!

-Check the beverages you sip throughout the day. Regular sodas and coffee drinks can add up to hundreds of calories. Look for a lower-calorie beverage that can still satisfy you.

-Remember, cutting only 250-500 calories a day from your current intake can result in a $\frac{1}{2}$ -2 pound per week weight loss!



EXERCISE:

-Exercise is important for controlling body weight, promoting a feeling of well-being, and reducing the risk of chronic disease.

-It is recommended that people exercise at moderate intensity for at least 30 minutes per day. Most importantly, these 30 minutes do not have to be continuous. Break up your daily exercise into 10 or 15 minute sessions for more convenience. The key is to make sure that you are getting your heart rate up. Increase the intensity and amount of exercise as tolerated to burn more calories and always check with your doctor before starting any exercise program.



-Simple Exercise Ideas:

-Go for a 10 minute walk in the morning, a 10 minute walk at lunch, and a 10 minute walk after dinner.



-Put some music on and dance!

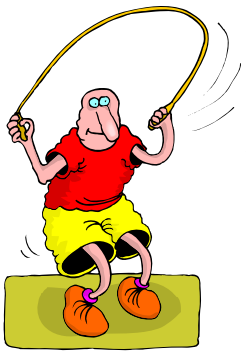
-Take the stairs instead of the elevator-start with one flight and work your way up.

-When shopping, park towards the back of the parking lot and walk.

-In good weather, do some yard work: rake the leaves, mow the lawn, or even garden.

-Join an aerobics, yoga, or pilates class.





-Lift hand weights while watching TV or climb stairs, jump rope, or do sit-ups during commercials!

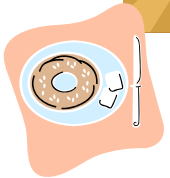
Snacking:



- Snacking isn't a bad thing. It is a great way to help you feel more satisfied and more energized! Make sure that you are only snacking when you are really hungry and not for other reasons like boredom.
- If your next meal is going to be within 1-2 hours, then limit a snack to about 100 calories. If your next meal is 2 or more hours away, choose a snack that provides 150-200 calories.
- Snacks that contain protein and/or fiber will be more filling.

- **Healthy Snack Ideas:**

- ✓ String cheese with whole grain crackers
- ✓ Non-fat yogurt with fruit and granola
- ✓ Whole-wheat pita bread with hummus
- ✓ Tortilla chips with salsa
- ✓ Half of a small whole-wheat bagel with peanut butter
- ✓ Plain or lightly buttered popcorn
- ✓ Trail mix
- ✓ Fresh fruit and vegetables are always a good option too!



- This doesn't mean you can never have a piece of cake, pie, or candy! Look at your overall meal plan and see what fits. There is no need to completely eliminate a particular food from your diet.

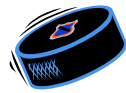
Estimating Portion Sizes:

- The important thing about watching what you eat is knowledge of portion size. The Food Guide Pyramid gives the amount of recommended servings for each food group. The key is to figure out how many serving are actually found in a portion of food.

- Use the following as a good way to estimate amounts:



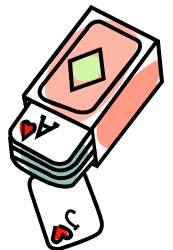
- ✓ 1 teaspoon = about the size of the tip of your pointer finger
- ✓ 1 tablespoon = about the size of a tube of lipstick
- ✓ 1/4 cup = one large egg
- ✓ 1/2 cup = 1 handful
- ✓ 1 cup = size of a tennis ball



- Use the following to estimate amounts of foods:



- ✓ 3 oz meat = deck of cards or the palm of your hand
- ✓ 1 oz cheese = lipstick tube or thumb
- ✓ 1 teaspoon peanut butter = tip of your pointer finger
- ✓ 1 medium fruit = baseball
- ✓ 1 medium bagel = hockey puck
- ✓ 1 small baked potato = computer mouse



Some Extra Tips to Keep in Mind:

- 1) Make realistic changes and set realistic goals.
- 2) Remember that every person is different-what works for one person may not work you. The key is trying different things until you find what works best for you!
- 3) The key to any successful diet is moderation!

Stop by the Healthy Eating Tip of the Month display located in the University Hospital cafeteria on the 2nd floor to pick up brochures related to fad diets and healthy eating.

Enter to win Zonya Foco's Lickety-Split Meals cookbook!



Visit the following websites for more information on how to lose weight the healthy way:

[USDA Food Pyramid](#)

[2005 Dietary Guidelines](#)

[American Dietetic Association](#)

[Spark People](#)

[For caloric values of foods](#)

[Zonya Foco's Website](#)

[Information on Fad Diets](#)

References

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Nelson, Jennifer. Simple Diet Changes, BIG Rewards. *Today's Diet & Nutrition*. May/June 2008. Pg. 72-73.

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The Truth about Fad Diets from www.eatright.org

www.everydiet.org

www.mypyramid.gov

www.RD411.com

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