

Fad Diets Defined

Special points of interest:

- Fad diets can lead to quick weight loss. Fad diets can also lead to quick weight re-gain.
- Fad diets are really low calorie diets.
- Fad diets can lead to nutrient deficiencies.
- The safest way to lose weight is to follow USDA Food Patterns.

What are fad diets?

Fad diets take many forms. They make dieting and weight loss seem easy.

To help you determine if a diet is a fad ask yourself these questions.

1. Does it ask you to eliminate one or several food groups?
2. Does the diet promise quick results such as 5 or more pounds of weight loss a week?
3. Are there several personal testimonies that are used as a proof of effectiveness?
4. Does the diet use only certain foods that

offer special advantages for weight loss?

5. Does the diet recommend supplements or pills as part of the plan?
6. Is the diet written or advertised by a celebrity?
7. Is there any scientific evidence that the combination of foods or methods in the diet work?
8. Is exercise minimized as a weight loss aid?
9. Did the diet gain quickly in popularity and then fade away?
10. Does the diet provide lists of foods that

can be eaten and others that must be eliminated?

11. Is any research data presented sponsored by the company publishing the diet? Is there external review provided by other researchers?
12. Do the results simply sound too good to be true?

Losing weight permanently is difficult but it can be done. It takes determination, calorie counting, lifestyle changes along with smart food choices.



Diet books abound in your local bookstores.

USDA Food Patterns and MyPlate

One of the most researched diet plans in the world is the USDA Food Patterns by calorie level: http://www.choosemyplate.gov/global_nav/pdf_food_intake.html All nutrition research in the United States is used as a background for making the recommendations found in the USDA Food Patterns. Groups of specialists in various areas in nutrition determined the amount of

foods that would provide appropriate nutrients for each calorie level.

The USDA Intake Patterns is illustrated by the new MyPlate. There is an emphasis to reduce the *amount* of food consumed while at the same time consuming nutrient rich foods that would provide all the necessary vitamins and minerals. Also, the recommendation is to in-

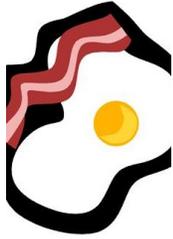
crease fruit and vegetable intake, reduce foods high in salt and sugar, and to switch to lower fat dairy products.

The MyPlate plan encourages that we include foods from all food groups at each meal. Choosing a variety of fruits and vegetables of different color each week ensures we get all the protective phytochemicals we need.

Inside this issue:

- Low carbohydrate, high fat diets 2
- Low fat and very low fat diets 2
- Magic foods 3
- Liquid diets 3

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High protein diets tend to be high in meat, eggs, cheese and poultry.

Most fad diets lead to weight loss because they are low in calories.

Low carbohydrate, high fat diets

Examples of this type of diet are the Atkins Diet, The Zone Diet, Sugar Busters and Protein Power. The theory behind these types of diets is that carbohydrates promote insulin production and increased insulin then leads to weight gain. Reducing insulin levels by eliminating carbohydrates is then thought to lead to weight loss.

Low carbohydrate diets are high in fat (about 60% of calories) while carbohydrate intake is severely restricted (about 10% of calories). On the induction phase many of these diets recommend only 20 - 30 grams of carbohydrate, increasing it to 40 - 60 grams during the weight loss phase and increasing it to 60- 90 grams during the weight maintenance

phase. Such low intake of carbohydrates can lead to headaches, irritability and bad breath. Many experience headaches on these diets due to the fact that the brain uses about 120 grams of carbohydrates a day for energy. Carbohydrates are the only source of energy for the brain. It cannot use fat or protein for energy, therefore when we restrict carbohydrates to 20 grams, our brain is suffering. That is one of the most important reasons not to go on this type of diet.

Fat intake can be two times the recommended level and protein intake can be 3 - 4 times greater than normal.

It is possible to lose pounds quickly on low carbohydrate diets, but the initial weight loss is due to

water loss from the liver and the muscle. Body stores carbohydrates in the form of glycogen in the muscle and the liver. Glycogen also attracts water. During carbohydrate restriction, the stored glycogen is used and the stored water is released leading to weight loss. Fat utilized for energy under low carbohydrate conditions produces ketones. A high level of ketones and a high protein intake reduces appetite and food intake. Many don't feel hungry and they begin to eat fewer calories, about 1400 on average, which can lead to weight loss for most people. The plan is also very structured, with very little room for individualization so there is no decision-making required. Some body proteins are broken down for energy resulting in muscle loss.

Low fat and very low fat diets

Diets that fall in this category are the Pritikin Principle, Eat More, Weigh Less and the Scarsdale Diet. The low fat (LF) and very low fat (VLF) diets are difficult to follow and require special food preparation techniques and ingredients. Only about 10-13% of calories come from fat, 79% from carbohydrate and about 17% from protein. Normal dietary intake recommends that 30% calories come from fat. The fat restriction makes it almost impossible to eat regular meals containing animal protein due to the high fat content of most meats. In terms of food preparation, very little, or no fat is used when the food is

cooked, which can make the food less palatable. The diet can also lead to deficiencies of fat soluble vitamins and minerals. It can lead to deficiencies of essential fatty acid, that are involved in many organ systems in the body, including the brain and skin. Also many essential hormones are synthesized from fats or cholesterol.

Caloric intake on the LF diets tends to be about 1450. This is low enough so that most adults will lose weight on them. It is not a diet one can follow in the long term due to the severe restrictions in fat intake. It would not allow a person to eat out, or buy ready made foods that are

higher in fat than the diet. It would take a serious commitment to follow a LF diet.

LF diets can lead to reduction in blood cholesterol and LDL levels and reduce cardiovascular risk.

There are specialized LF diets that a physician may prescribe under specialized conditions for weight loss or other conditions. Most of those would be liquid diets and the individual would be under doctor's supervision.



Low fat diets use a lot of grains products in their menus.

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Magic Foods

Examples of diets that fall under this category are the Cabbage Soup Diet, Eat Right for Your Type, the Rice Diet and the Raw Food Diet.

These diets claim that eating particular foods or combinations of foods will cause rapid fat burning and weight loss. The rationale for these diets is that weight loss is due to the special combination of ingredients provided by the diet, the enzymes in these foods or chemical reactions that form, or because they eliminate 'toxins'

Liquid diets

Liquid diets are good at controlling caloric intake if one limits intake to one meal replacement at mealtime. This can quickly reduce calories leading to weight loss. If you eat fewer calories than you burn off, you will lose weight. The most common types of liquid diets are those that replace just one or two meals (usually breakfast and lunch) with drinks leaving the person to eat a sensible meal in the evening that would have foods from all food groups. Many of these diets also sell snack bars for in-between meals.

Some liquid diets are used to replace all of the meals, three or four times a day. These may be medically supervised plans available only through doctors' offices or hospitals. A physician may prescribe a liquid diet for someone who is about to undergo a certain surgical procedure to lose weight quickly. This type of liquid diet is supervised by the doctor due to

out of your body. Individuals who follow these diets may experience some weight loss, but this is because the diet is rigid and allows few options. When there are only a few choices available, it becomes boring and food intake decreases resulting in a reduced calorie diet. In addition, the cooking methods used may eliminate all of most or the dietary fats.

There's no scientific evidence that any one foods used in these diets or combinations of foods facilitate fat burning in the body.

the dangers associated with quick weight loss and consuming a liquid diet only.

The liquid diet drinks should contain a balance of nutrients needed throughout the day. You want to make sure you're getting 100% of the daily values of all the different vitamins and minerals with all the meal replacement drinks, whether it is 2 or 3 drinks. The Dietary Reference Intakes table put together by the Food and Nutrition Board gives the amount of specific vitamins and minerals required by individuals. Missing out on essential nutrients can lead to side effects such as fatigue, dizziness, hair loss, gallstones, cold intolerance, electrolyte imbalance, and heart damage. Many liquid diets lack an appropriate amount of dietary fiber which can lead to constipation and other digestive ailments.

For many people, weight loss achieved this way may be short-

Depending on the diet, there may be protein, vitamin and mineral deficiencies due to restriction of foods. Consuming these diets for the long term is not recommended. They can lead to calcium deficiency which increases the risk for osteoporosis; or iron deficiency which leads to anemia. Consuming these types of diets can also lead to essential fatty acid deficiency which is difficult to diagnose.

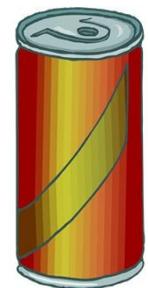
lived. One of the biggest drawbacks of these diets is the fact that the person can lose a lot of weight quickly, but as soon as they start eating normal food, all the weight and more will be regained. This is because the person has not learned any new eating habits.

To reduce the likelihood of weight regain after a liquid diet, you may want to substitute only one meal to replace with a drink. In addition, following the USDA Food Patterns for a particular calorie level can help in learning about portion sizes and amounts of food to consume at a certain calorie level.



Diets can create controversy among authors and health care practitioners.

Liquid diets that include a meal or two per day, or that teach you healthier eating habits, will be more likely to help you keep the weight off over the long term.



Use liquid diets judiciously while learning about healthy eating.

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