

## Fad Diets

### What is a fad diet?

There are many different definitions of what a fad diet consists of. One definition is any weight loss plan that quickly gains popularity and may become unpopular just as quick. A more specific definition is any weight loss program or aid that promises to produce dramatic weight loss in a very short amount of time. Each type of fad diet varies in the amount of food that is restricted and what types of foods may be restricted.

### Are fad diets healthy?

The basis of these diets is usually a very restricted diet that may even eliminate certain food groups all together. Research has shown that in order to obtain the amount of nutrients our body needs on a daily basis we must consume a balanced and varied diet. Fad diets do not allow consumers to eat a well-balanced diet in most cases which causes the lack of nutrients to the body. In particular, the diets that eliminate certain foods from a person's diet completely put the person at risk for nutrient deficiencies. Many of the diet authors will suggest that consumers take daily supplements to make up for the lost nutrients; however supplements do not provide all the plant chemicals and nutrients that our bodies need to function properly. Another risk of these diets is that they produce rapid weight loss but do not teach the person about long-term weight management. There is also a misconception portrayed by the diet authors that there is no need to increase your amount of physical activity for weight loss to occur. Many of these diets actually increase your risks for certain diseases in the long-term, which does not occur with normal weight loss. Finally, these fad diets are often short lived because the person becomes bored of eating the same things all the time, this may cause a person to use multiple diets which can actually alter their metabolism. The constant use of diets will actually slow the person's metabolism down and make it easier for them to regain the weight once the extreme diet is stopped. Most of the weight lost using a fad diet is water and muscle mass, so the weight is easily regained once the diet is stopped.

### Types of Diets and Related Risks:

Diet Type	Examples	Claims	Risks
<i>High Protein - Low Carbohydrates/ No Carbohydrates</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Atkins' New Diet Revolution</li> <li>• The Carbohydrate Addict's Diet</li> <li>• Protein Power</li> <li>• Sugar Busters</li> <li>• The Zone</li> <li>• The South Beach Diet</li> <li>• Dr. Phil's Ultimate Weight Solution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carbohydrates cause weight gain so they must be limited or eliminated from the diet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ketosis</li> <li>• Increased Blood Pressure</li> <li>• Heart Disease</li> <li>• Nutrient Deficiency</li> <li>• Dehydration</li> <li>• Low Caloric Intake</li> <li>• Kidney Stones</li> <li>• Bone Loss</li> <li>• Certain Cancers</li> <li>• Kidney Disease</li> </ul>
<i>Food-Specific Diets</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grapefruit</li> <li>• Cabbage Soup</li> <li>• Subway</li> <li>• Peanut butter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific foods cause the body to increase the amount of calories burned</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't promote healthy eating habits</li> <li>• Not nutritionally balanced</li> <li>• Very low in calories</li> </ul>
<i>Liquid Diets</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slim Fast</li> <li>• Cambridge Diet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All the nutrients you need in a low calorie form (usually about 400 calories)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extremely low calorie diets may cause serious illness or even death</li> <li>• Only works short-term</li> <li>• Doesn't teach long-term healthy eating habits</li> </ul>
<i>Diet Pills/Aides</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dexatrim</li> <li>• Caffeine Pills</li> <li>• Ephedrine</li> <li>• Redux</li> <li>• Phen/Fen</li> <li>• Hydroxycut</li> <li>• Dexatrim Natural</li> <li>• Metabolife 356</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can help control appetite by taking a pill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not scientifically supported</li> <li>• May contain phenylpropanolamine which can cause: blood pressure elevation, dizziness, nervousness, nausea, insomnia</li> <li>• Ephedrine may cause: addiction, headaches, high blood pressure, heart palpitations, heart attack</li> <li>• Not always regulated by the FDA</li> </ul>
<i>Pre-measured Diets</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jenny Craig</li> <li>• Nutri-system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eating a balanced diet low in fat causes weight loss</li> <li>• There are good carbs and bad carbs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May not promote healthy eating habits after diet termination</li> <li>• Costly</li> </ul>

## How to spot a fad diet:

Here are some things to look for that are common in fad diets:

- Blames weight gain on things like blood type, personality, or hormones
- Carries no warnings for individuals with health problems to seek medical advice before beginning the plan
- Carries warnings of danger from one of the products
- Discourages drinking water
- Doesn't address the need for portion control
- Doesn't allow freedom and flexibility
- Doesn't recommend or include physical activity
- Encourages unlimited consumption of certain foods
- Forbids or limits certain foods
- Ignores individual differences in weight loss
- Lists good and bad foods
- Must combine certain foods in each meal
- Must pay a good amount of money to get results
- Promises a "quick fix" with little to no effort
- Rapid weight loss, more than 2 pounds a week
- Requires you to purchase a certain product
- Severe limits on carbohydrates or fat
- Simple conclusions drawn from complex studies
- Sounds too good to be true
- Uses testimonials or case studies to show results
- You must drink your daily calorie intake

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