

Uncovering the truth: fad diets

[Food & Diet](#)



Uncovering the Truth: Fad Diets Uncovering the Truth: Fad Diets Longing for perfection has always been the driving force behind the development of civilization and the inventive spirit of the human being. We want to be perfect in every aspect of our lives: family, work, wealth, appearance and health. Lately society has turned its attention on appearance and health.

With shows like Biggest Loser, a reality television series that follows overweight people learning to live and maintain a healthy lifestyle while competing against other contestants on the show to lose the most amount of weight, becoming increasingly popular and countless amounts of weight loss books filling up the shelves in bookstores; it seems that our society is focusing more strongly on getting physically fit and healthy. While some people choose physical activity to maintain their bodies in good shape, others prefer a passive way of dieting.

Dieting originated as a way to maintain a healthy lifestyle. While dieting, the dieter finds a way to organize their eating habits so that the food they consume decreases or stabilizes their weight safely. Although people continue to use dieting as a tool for healthy weight loss, the diversity of diets today is overwhelming. The popularity of dieting has begun to overshadow its essence, in turn causing people to abuse diets and show slight consideration to the ways dieting can actually influence a person's body.

In some cases diets have proven to be of paramount importance to a person's life, weight experts have determined that a well designed diet-and-exercise program can improve your odds of succeeding at weight management and cure things such as diabetes: Type Two. But in many cases,

diets abuse persons' physical health and mental sanity. A special term has been invented for the types of unhealthy diets that involve restricted nutrition and/or limit the amount of the necessary to normal functioning of one's organism calories, promising quick and easy weight-loss.

Subsequently, they are referred to as fad diets. This is a look at some of society's most popular fad diets and their effects. Description of Fad Diets These are some of the most popular diets out now: · Low-Carbohydrate/High-Protein Diets · High Carbohydrate/Low Fat Diets · Controlled Portion Size Diets · Liquid Diets · Dieting Pills · Cabbage Soup Diet The first diet type we look at is currently one of the most followed plans in the world. These are known as Low-Carbohydrate (CHO)/Low Fat Diets.

Although there are many different versions of these diets the basis for them is the same. These diets declare that the source of the weight problem is CHO, thus concluding that if CHO is eliminated; the dieter will successfully lose weight. For instance, the core of the very popular Atkins diet is based around the theory that significant consumption of CHO is the specific cause for obesity. Therefore, Atkins restricts the dieters' daily CHO intake and reduces their caloric intake to between 1, 200 and 1, 800. Atkins, 1992) In general, this type of dieting allows such foods as meats, poultry, fish, eggs, CHO-low vegetables, and butter-although prohibiting CHO products (bread, pasta, potatoes, etc.). Although dieters may lose weight at first, the grave reality about these diets is that the food plan they propose is not entirely safe. While on these diet plans, the body misses out on vitamin B and C and other essential nutrients. This is due to the lack of fruits, whole grains, and

fibers allowed in this diet. Furthermore, the dieters' run the risk of damaging the normal functioning of their kidneys.

Without CHO to use for fuel, the body switches into a metabolic state called ketosis. When the body is in ketosis, it gathers energy from ketones- a form of carbon that is created from the breakdown of fat. The more ketones in the body, the harder the kidneys have to work to filter those ketones out. Making the kidneys work over like that can result in renal failure. (Pasternak, 2006)

Next we look at another popular diet fad type, although not as popular as the low carbohydrate diets, High Carbohydrate (CHO)/Low Fat diets are quickly gaining momentum. This is thanks in large part to Dr.

Dean Ornish's Eat More Weigh Less Diet, also known as the Ornish Diet. These diet plans focus not on the amount of calories being consumed, but rather on the CHO/ fat balance in meals. On the Ornish Diet foods that are allowed to be eaten in any quantity and at any time include vegetables, fruits, and grains. Some foods, such as low-fat dairy products, may be consumed in small quantities. However, there are food types that are strictly forbidden as part of the diet plan, among these are foods are meat, oils, nuts, sugar, and dairy product that are not low-fat. (Ornish, 2007)

Unfortunately, these diets do not make a clear distinction between the good fat and the bad fat. Since the emphasis is based so strongly on fats dieters are lead to believe that fat itself is the problem. In actuality the most dangerous fat is transient fat, which may be found in cookies, while animal fats are known to be beneficial to the human organism. For example, it is common knowledge that fish and nuts contain fats that help the human body

fight heart disease. We need to be aware of what is good and bad for the body so we know what kind of foods to eat and what the limit is.

The next diet we look at is much different from the previous one's we have looked at. Unlike the CHO eliminating or fat eliminating diets, The Volumetric Plan Diet claims that what is being consumed is not what counts, rather how much one eats at a time. (Rolls and Barnett, 2000) This type of dieting teaches to control the whole process of eating by checking the size of the serving for each meal and mastering the number of meals a day a person has. Consequently, these diets do not address the quality of the food pattern; they instead concentrate on servings.

For example, The Volumetric Weight Control Plan suggests that the dieter lower their caloric intake by 1, 000 calories. (Rolls and Barnett, 2000) While the plan explains very well how to count calories, they neglect to inform dieters of the healthy choice of foods that should be consumed. Abiding by this fad dieting can be mentally stressful as the dieter feels enormous guilt if they stray from the diet. Also, this diet makes it justifiable to consume unhealthy food, by allowing the dieter to limit the unhealthy food to small portions but with no limits as to how many times a day it should be consumed.

Liquid Fad diets establish liquids as the main element of the diets.

Commonly, these liquids come in the form of shakes or juices. The severe form of this diet requires consumption of liquid only; nevertheless, there is a lighter approach when shakes substitute one or two meals. This is an extremely low-calorie type of fad diet. Its main drawback is the short-term

results it produces. Though manufacturers claim that the liquids purify the organism, there is not essential scientific evidence to support this claim. The facts are that this diet works by diminishing the calories intake.

However, this is achieved through low nutrition value the liquids. General consequences from these diets include frequent colds, hair loss, and fatigue. Absence of natural sources of vitamins and microelements such as fruits and vegetables may also lead to digestion disorders. Another type of diet plan that may lead to digestion disorders, among other things, is fairly considered the most hazardous of all the fad diets. In the past two decades, Americans have spent billions of dollars on diet pills. Though diet pills offer quick solution to the problems of being overweight, they do not deliver the promised result.

In the case we will look at phenylpropanolamine (PPA). PPA is one of the most widely used hunger suppressants. PPA affects the hypothalamus, the control center of the brain; it interrupts the hypothalamus from telling the brain that the body is hungry, thus, causing a person to eat less. The negative side of PPA is that you must stay on it to curb your appetite and some of the more mild side affect are irritability, palpitation of the heart and being tired. More serious side effects include cardiac arrhythmias, intracerebral hemorrhage and psychosis.

Concluding our diet types is the widespread Cabbage Soup Diet. A unique fact about this diet is that no one really knows where it originated from. The cabbage soup diet recommends that the dieter eat little more than cabbage soup throughout the day. By cycling on and off of the diet (7 days on, 14 off)

it guarantees the dieter that they will lose anywhere from ten to twenty pounds in a weeks' time. (Danbrot, 1997) The truth about this diet is that it restricts your caloric intake to less than 1, 000 a day. There are no proteins or fats in this diet and an unhealthy amount of vitamins and minerals are missing. (Pasternak, 2006) Side effects of this diet include: diarrhea, light headedness and abdominal pain. These are some of the most popular diets being used by people today. We have seen the diets and learned all of the negative e physical reaction our bodies may have to them, but dieters also run a risk of being physiologically affected by these diets. Physical and Physiological Consequences of Fad Dieting In general, fad diets are usually low-calorie diets that result in a quite sufficient weight loss over a short period of time. However, it is deceptive because it is not fat-loss, but instead water-loss.

Weight is simply gained back when a person returns to their normal eating habits. Latest research shows that such a pattern causes risk of obesity and may lead to anorexia or bulimia. Two-thirds of the human organism consists of water, thus, a considerable water-loss to the body results in dehydration. Dehydration, in return, will lead to weakness and reduction in urine and sweat production, which may also lead to an electrolyte imbalance.

Electrolytes live in our blood and plasma, and their job is to transmit nerve impulses throughout the body. (McBride, 2008, June 11) Since electrolytes are fluid-based, drastic water loss through extreme dieting or vomiting can rapidly lower the amount of this essential substance. Less liquid in the organism can lead to a nervous breakdown or heart attack. Furthermore, fad diets may lead to a number of different conditions. Diets that encourage you

to eliminate milk, oil, potatoes may lead to deficiency vitamin A, which is immensely important for a healthy functioning of the body. In actuality all the fad diets covered in this paper lacked adequate nutritional value.

Diets, like Atkins for example, do not provide the vitamins the dieter needs, or micro-elements, such as zinc and calcium to maintain a healthy body. The human body needs a well-rounded nutrition that includes all the vitamins and micro-elements available. If these vitamins are omitted on a day-to-day basis it will inevitably result in energy depletion and quick wearing out of the internal organs. The first sign that your diet is a poor nutrition choice is experiencing sleeping disorders which eventually may lead to memory deterioration. Malnutrition is frequently observed in patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

In 60% of all COPD patients malnutrition is seen but only 29% of those patients have a body weight equal to or above 90% of ideal body weight. (Consequences of Poor dieting, 2010) Another result of lacking the necessary vitamins is considerable hair loss as a reaction by the hair follicles to the shock the organism is experiencing. As a result of being on a diet, the dieter may not get any satisfaction from what he or she is eating. Desire for receiving pleasure from food is natural to the human being; accordingly lack of satisfaction is one of the main reasons why many people drop dieting early on.

When abiding by the diet, the restricted product becomes the obtrusive idea, and the longer the person stays on a diet, the more frustrated they become. Before long, the desire to eat the prohibited food item overcomes their fear

of failing the quest for weight loss. As a result of the struggle they face, the dieter may start consuming much more calories than they actually need, or used to eat before becoming a dieter and quickly gain the weight (Medina, *DiETING and its Consequences*, n. d.) Likewise, the dieter may develop food obsession, from pickiness to constant counting of calories.

Whether the person is still on a diet or not, their mind still functions as that of a dieter, which will include all of the damaging consequences; including depression. In conclusion, the research carried out in this work has shown that fad diets present unconditional danger to health and may lead to serious dysfunctions. Satisfying our needs is the natural law of life. Dieting requires us to ignore the natural necessity of the human body. No matter how attractive fad diets may seem, it is highly recommended they be avoided. A quickly- achieved result is not a sufficient price for damaged health.

Instead of eliminating essential nutrients from the menu, dieters should focus on keeping a healthy eating plan that includes different types of foods rich in vitamins and micro-elements. Healthy habits, such as being physically active, are an excellent way to permanently lose extra weight with the benefit of improving their health. References Atkins, R. , MD. , (1992). *Dr. Atkins New Diet Revolution*. New York: HarperCollins *Consequences of Poor Diets* (2010, January 03) retrieved from: [http://www. diagnose-me. com/cond/C2556. html](http://www.diagnose-me.com/cond/C2556.html) Danbrot, M. (1997) *The New Cabbage Soup Diet*. New York: St.

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